

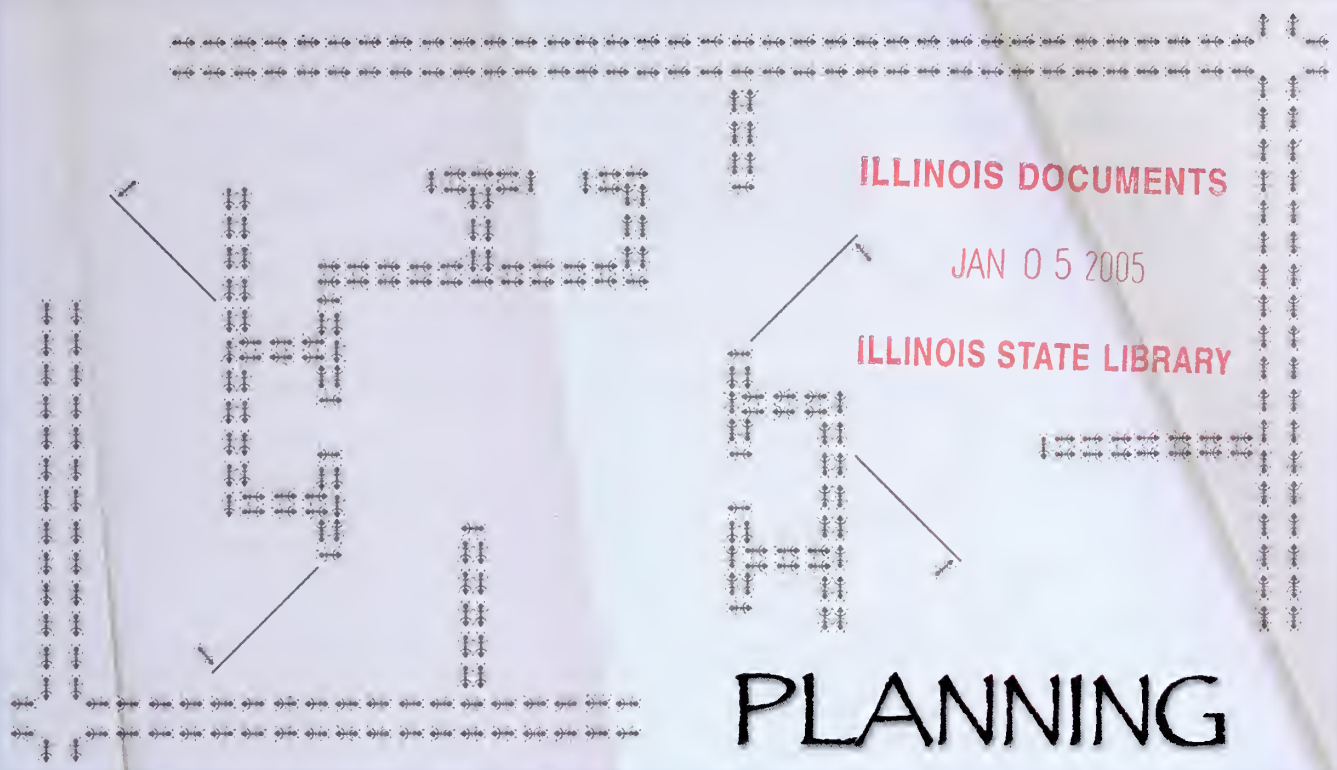
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# Illinois Issues

January 2005 \$3.95

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## PLANNING FOR ILLINOIS' FUTURE

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Peggy Boyer Long



## How can Illinois prepare to meet the future?

by Peggy Boyer Long

**W**hat might the future look like? And how can Illinois prepare to meet it? These are a couple of the questions our editors and writers will attempt to address over the coming year, the magazine's 30th Anniversary.

Philosopher George Santayana famously said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. We might say, also, that those who don't prepare for the future are condemned to chase it.

Hindsight is always easier, of course. It's no simple task to envision the future, let alone plan for it, especially in periods of rapid change. Who, for instance, could have guessed 30 years ago that Illinois would build trade relations with China. Who could have imagined an Internet-capable phone so small it can be carried in the hand, anywhere. Who could have foreseen the devolution of the nation's social contract from the public sector to the private sector, from government to the individual.

But if it's hard to envision the future, it's just as difficult to plan for it. Political scientist Chris Mooney cautions in this issue that state institutions aren't really geared to plan or to be visionary and that politicians have little incentive to make major changes or take long-distance leaps.

There's always plenty to do in the short run, anyway. And everyone has a wish list. In this issue, Charlie Wheeler shares his list, really his prescription for clearing out some nagging unfinished business to better position us for the years ahead: among them, correcting the state's structural deficit, reforming the way we finance public schools and overhauling Illinois' criminal code, which, as it happens, is an unwieldy brief on the hazards of incremental change and exhibit number one for the law of unintended consequences.

A case in point: "Get tough on crime" became a political slogan in the 1970s, so officials approved longer fixed sentences for certain crimes, then spent the '80s and '90s trying to build their way out of the resulting prison crowding. And now? The incentive for major change could be, in part, the political cover it would provide for making more discrete, but potentially unpopular, policy adjustments.

But Illinois may be at a more critical crossroad. Our destination may not yet be visible, but it's clear big changes are already under way. So here at the magazine we, too, offer an abbreviated list of possibilities, one that will guide our editors and writers as we enter our 30th year.

The world is shrinking and our place within it is shifting. Illinoisans, who live in a major export state, surely will play some role in crafting a balance between our economic needs and those of our trading partners. This will challenge us to measure our sense of responsibility, including any we might have for workers who live in other countries.

The role of government is evolving. Are we up to the challenge of weighing the social costs of creating an "ownership society," as President George W. Bush envisions it?

*Illinois Issues* has assessed the devolution of federal responsibilities to the states and, in turn, preemption of the states' powers by the feds. But now devolution appears to be proceeding once again from government to the individual. Under that scenario, what will happen to those who won't have access to food or housing or health care? These next few years could test severely our historic commitment to a national community.

The relationship among the nation's governments is shifting — again. What might this mean for Illinois?

Donald F. Kettl has outlined some probabilities in *Governing* magazine. "The emerging Bush domestic strategy," he wrote in that publication's October

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issue, "is the first one since the Hoover administration that does not envision a major role for state and local governments."

This could test our understanding of federalism. As Kettl notes — and as we have detailed in past editions of *Illinois Issues* — Bush's philosophy of governance "means stronger performance requirements in education, block grants for Medicaid, and more vouchers rather than categorical assistance for housing. It means pushing state and local governments to the role of junior partners in the federal relationship."

The staff at *Illinois Issues*, a

magazine devoted to public affairs, hopes Illinoisans will meet one other challenge, as well: the strength of our civic stewardship. In this issue, Chris Wetterich addresses the distance this state must go to train good citizens.

Our national democratic experiment is, after all, provisional, as Joseph J. Ellis makes clear in *Founding Brothers*, his powerful collection of essays on the American Revolution. But in today's overheated public arena, can politicians afford to take a long view? Will citizens have the forbearance?

Do we have a choice? □

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## Celebrations

For the past three decades, *Illinois Issues* has published in-depth reporting and thoughtful analysis on state government and politics. We think this is more than a milestone; it's an accomplishment.

So we want to celebrate. Twice, in fact. Once in Springfield and once in Chicago.

On February 24, we'll join WUIS public radio for "a celebration of excellence" at the Executive Mansion in Springfield.

The magazine and the radio station were each born 30 years ago out of a strong belief that the university located in the state capital should excel in public affairs reporting. Both are part of the Center for State Policy and Leadership and are located on the campus of the University of Illinois at Springfield. Both have bureaus at the state Capitol.

Next month, we'll reflect on this shared past and look to the future of public affairs reporting in Illinois. You're invited. (See page 2 for details.) We'll begin the festivities with an hors d'oeuvre reception at 6 p.m. The program will include J. Michael Lennon, who is emeritus vice president for academic affairs at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Penn. During his tenure at UIS, he led and championed *Illinois Issues* and WUIS

radio. He'll be joined by Kevin Klose, president and chief executive officer of National Public Radio in Washington, D.C., and by Michael Lawrence, the director of the Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and a member of the magazine's advisory board. Longtime readers will remember him as a regular writer for the magazine during his stint as a Statehouse reporter.

This spring, *Illinois Issues* will celebrate again with a 30th Anniversary luncheon in Chicago. Details are in the works, but we'll keep you posted. We plan to use that opportunity to explore, from a fresh perspective, some of the policy challenges Illinois could face in the coming decades.

Much has changed since the first edition of *Illinois Issues* rolled off the presses in January 1975. What our founders could not foresee was the increasing diversity of this state, the rise in the global economy and the rapid evolution of technology. What might the next 30 years bring? We hope luncheon participants will help make some assessments.

As *Illinois Issues* celebrates its 30th Anniversary, we plan to honor our past by considering the state's future. Come join us in Springfield and Chicago.





# Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

January 2005



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*Patrick J. Guinane*



## The New Year could ring in another telecommunications rewrite

by Pat Guinane

About a year ago state Rep. Kevin McCarthy got a Christmas card from his cable company. In addition to wishing him a happy holiday, the premium television provider wrote to assure him that it would not be ringing in the New Year with another rate hike.

So the Orland Park Democrat was understandably furious when he unwrapped his next bill and saw a new service charge. McCarthy vented a few weeks later when a lobbyist for Comcast Communications came before the House Consumer Protection Committee.

"Most of the people who live in my area feel they have more control over gasoline prices than they do over these cable prices," McCarthy said, at one point waving his Comcast Christmas card in the air.

It's easy to see where he was coming from. Much like gasoline, cable television lacks effective competition. Since Congress deregulated the industry in 1996, cable rate hikes have tripled the rate of inflation. According to the federal Government Accountability Office, from 1997 to 2002 the cost of basic service rose 40 percent.

To some, the equation reads this way: Deregulation minus competition equals high prices. Illinois lawmakers did that math four years ago when they updated the state's telecommunications law. They sought to foster competition and lower phone bills by deregulating the

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*The state's 2001 telecom rewrite expires this summer, and SBC Communications wants legislators to go back to the drawing board. First, SBC would like them to look at their cable bills.*

industry. But they also effectively capped the cost of basic phone service, recognizing the limits for competition in a state where one company owns most of the phone lines.

The state's 2001 telecom rewrite expires this summer, and that company, then Ameritech, now SBC Communications, wants legislators to go back to the drawing board. First, SBC would like them to look at their cable bills.

"I would suggest that cable is the biggest competitor to us going forward, bigger than wireless," says Carrie Hightman, president of SBC Illinois. Her company wants Illinois lawmakers to consider a future when cable companies occupy territory Ma Bell once had all to herself.

In addition to television program-

ming, cable subscribers can now tap into broadband, technology that allows a single wire to simultaneously deliver hundreds of TV channels and high speed Internet access. SBC and other phone companies counter with DSL, or digital subscriber line technology, which offers rapid data transmission over regular phone lines.

Today, consumers can decide whether a phone line or a cable connection will be their onramp to the information superhighway. But SBC says legislators should look to a not-too-distant future in which telephone and television are intrinsically linked to the Internet.

In 2001, Illinois lawmakers moved to increase telephone competition by ensuring that other phone companies could, for a fee, offer their services over SBC phone lines.

Now, the emerging technology known as Voice over Internet Protocol can take phone lines out the equation. Already available to a small number of Chicago residents, VoIP converts a normal household telephone signal to a digital signal, which allows customers to make cheap calls over the Internet.

SBC points to a recent report from Yankee Group, a Boston-based communications and networking research and consulting firm, that says, "The potential market for VoIP services nationally is 90 million homes, i.e. any household addressable by broadband service." The



report estimates that by 2007, VoIP will provide phone service to 13 million homes.

SBC and Comcast, a leading cable provider in the Chicago area, both plan to begin offering VoIP in the city sometime this year. The turf war can only escalate, as SBC soon plans to package television service with its phone and Internet offerings. In the phone market, Comcast and other cable companies arrive armed with an advantage current SBC competitors have never had — infrastructure. That has SBC surveying the regulatory playing field.

“Cable really has a huge edge, considering that they’re the monopoly in TV,” says Hightman, SBC Illinois president. “They’re the monopoly in content, and they have lines to each home and can basically exploit the Voice over Internet Protocol because they’re the dominant provider of broadband connections.”

The state’s leading consumer advocacy group agrees that cable companies have free rein to raise rates, but says it’s premature to suggest legislators must pave the way for a VoIP revolution.

“Broadband has the potential to deliver phone service cheaply and efficiently and we look forward to that, but we’re a long way from ubiquitous broadband,” says Martin Cohen, executive director of the Citizens Utility Board. “In fact, according to FCC data, fewer than 20 percent of Illinois consumers have a broadband connection.”

Cohen argues that affordability and geography will continue to restrict broadband access to the state’s rural and low-income populations. In the meantime, he says, basic telephone service should remain economically regulated.

“Overall, the current act is perfectly functional for the current needs of the state and the industry,” he says. “I don’t see that any major overhaul is necessary.”

Lawmakers could simply move the law’s July expiration date back a few years, but it looks as though that won’t happen without a thorough review. In an interview with *Illinois Issues*, House Speaker Michael Madigan said he thinks telephone regulation is one of the issues the legislature will spend a significant amount of time on this session.

And last month, the Senate Environment

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***Lawmakers could simply move the law’s July expiration date back a few years, but it looks as though that won’t happen without a thorough review.***

and Energy Committee convened in Chicago, giving telecom industry players a chance to outline their positions.

“I was glad to hear at the hearing that almost all of the entities affected by this, whether it was consumer groups or phone companies, really praised the 2001 act,” says Sen. Dave Sullivan, the Park Ridge Republican who headed up the 2001 rewrite in the Senate. “If we actually go through substantive changes, it’s going to have to be long and serious discussions with many people involved.”

That was the case four years ago, but Sullivan questions whether Springfield’s current climate could facilitate such a bipartisan and bicameral endeavor. Even if legislators can insulate the telecom debate from the political gamesmanship that characterized last year’s divisive budget battle, some may prefer to wait for a clear signal from Washington, D.C.

Last March, a federal appeals court threw out Federal Communications Commission rules that SBC and other companies said forced them to give competitors access to their networks at artificially low rates. SBC made that same argument to the Illinois General Assembly two years ago, eventually winning legislation that would have allowed them to nearly double the rates they charge competitors. A federal court threw out that legislation, but SBC took its case to the Illinois Commerce Commission, which last summer allowed the company to raise its rates by about 30 percent. In light of the federal court ruling, SBC also is asking the commission to reconsider the 2001 state telecom rewrite provision forcing the company to open its network to competitors.

At both the state and federal levels, SBC competitors have fought to retain price controls that make offering service over SBC lines an economically viable endeavor and, in turn, give consumers greater choice. But major competitor AT&T seemed to wave a white flag this summer when it decided to stop marketing residential long-distance service to new customers, moving away from what was once a company staple to concentrate on its business services.

Seemingly building on its recent successes, SBC is the only player arguing Illinois must update its telecom regulations. By emphasizing the advent of Voice over Internet Protocol, the company could convince legislators to impose new regulations on cable companies or loosen existing telecom laws.

Lawmakers won’t want to give up the service standards they imposed on phone companies four years ago, but they might be willing to tell cable companies they too must address service outages in a certain time frame or risk fines. At the same time, it might be more palatable to ease rate restrictions on SBC rather than begin clamping down on cable rate hikes.

“I think that’s going to be the big battle: What do we do with cable?” says Sen. Denny Jacobs, an East Moline Democrat who helped author the last two telecom rewrites in 1992 and 2001.

“The question is do we get into regulating the cable industry a little bit more, especially if they’re being involved with [telephone],” Jacobs says. “It’s an interesting question. You can regulate the hard lines, but yet cable can raise their cable rate and then give a lower rate on their telephone portion. And is there cross subsidization? So should there be some fee or some regulation on the raising of cable rates in order to subsidize [telephone service]? And I know that’s one of the questions we’re going to have to look at.”

The outcome of this debate could mark the first time Illinois consumers study their cable bills to evaluate the state’s new telecommunications policy. If lawmakers take anything away from the experience of their colleague, Rep. McCarthy, the debate promises to be a taxing one. □

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# BRIEFLY

Illinois Issues' Statehouse Bureau Chief Pat Gminane sat down with the four legislative leaders to discuss some topics, new and old, that will confront the 94th General Assembly.

We covered the basics — budget woes, medical malpractice, gambling expansion — and let each address his own agenda for the spring session, which begins January 12. We tailored some questions to each individual.

The interviews took place in Springfield in mid-November. We edited the transcripts for clarity and published selected responses here. Transcripts of the complete interviews are available at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>.

## Michael Madigan

House  
Democratic  
Leadership  
Speaker of the House



Madigan, the longest-serving member of the House, has represented Chicago's Southwest Side since 1971. He also was a delegate to the state's 1970 Constitutional Convention. Madigan begins his 11th term as speaker this month.

**Q.** *What are the issues you would like to see addressed this spring?*

Number one: budget. Number two: further review of electric utility deregulation, review of telephone regulation and medical malpractice.

**Q.** *Why electric and telephone regulation?*

They're both scheduled for review.

**Q.** *Do you think the legislature will spend a lot of time addressing those issues?*

I think the legislature will spend a lot of time on all four of those issues. In the case of the budget, going in to the preparation of the next budget, we are looking at \$900 million of one-time revenue in the current budget. So, for those budget-makers who would like to stay even — in terms of the provision of service by the state of Illinois — in order to stay even, you have to find \$900 million before you get to a consideration of increases or growth in the budget.

I think we ought to spend a lot of time on electric utility deregulation because, although Illinois appears to have successfully transitioned to deregulation, there's a lot of serious issues to be addressed.

Number one would be the rate freeze that was put in place. At the time, it was argued that this would be beneficial for ratepayers, especially residential ratepayers. Over time, a legitimate question has been put, "Well, although we put a lid on what the rates might be, we may have also put a floor on what the rates could be." And competition over the last couple years, without the rate freeze, may have driven those rates lower than they are right now.

In addition, we provided for what they call stranded costs, which is an industry way of saying that the mistakes of the utility companies, notably Commonwealth Edison in building nuclear plants, would be paid for by the ratepayers.

Having done that, having done the rate freeze, you're now looking at a cliff, in terms of where you go with cost for the utility companies and for the rates.

In the case of the telephone companies, there has been a great change in telephone service. You probably carry a cell phone. And so all of that should be reviewed now, rather than later, because of the dramatic changes in the industry and technology.

**Q.** *The argument is that a move to a more free-market system would benefit everyone?*

And, in the case of the phone regulation — privately I put the question, and I guess I'll put it publicly right now: Why couldn't we follow the model that we followed in electric utility deregulation, where, in essence, we made Commonwealth Edison and the other distribution companies common carriers and took them out of the generation business. Why couldn't we just make SBC a common carrier for distribution and take them out of the other aspects of it. I'm sure they have some kind of response, but I think it's a question that ought to be put.

If you were to do that, then there's a little more rhyme and reason to this idea that they're deregulated but the legislature or the Commerce Commission is setting the rate for wholesale sales from people like SBC to the others.

**Q.** *As you mentioned, the rising cost of medical malpractice insurance is a significant issue. The Republicans contend the state needs to cap plaintiff awards for pain and suffering, which Democrats generally do not support. Short of that impasse, are there solutions that can be worked on this session?*

There's strong evidence that shows where you have caps, as they do in, say, California, what it's done is to provide that poor people with significant injuries as a result of medical malpractice, but not real bad injuries, can't get a lawyer to take the case because if a lawyer takes a case in California, with the \$250,000 cap, he processes the case, he gets a judgment for, say, \$1 million. The law reduces the million to \$250,000, and it reduces the fee also. So, for the lawyer, he doesn't see an economic incentive to get involved with the case.

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>



Next, I want to talk about the conflict of interest that the Illinois State Medical Society functions at. The medical society is the lobbyist for the doctors who subscribe to their program. Not every doctor in the state is a member of the medical society, but, for those who join, the medical society is their lobbyist, and the medical society has created and operates an insurance company. Last spring, as we debated the issue of medical malpractice insurance cost, it was apparent that, when pressed, the medical society lobbyist would represent the insurance company, not the medical society, which means not the doctors.

There are a lot of things that can be done to improve medical malpractice liability cost. You can strengthen the safeguards that are in place already, in terms of requirements to file the lawsuits. You can deal with instructions to the jury, coming from the judge. You can deal with personal asset protection for doctors.

But the ultimate goal of the medical society and its insurance company is to disenfranchise people who want to file lawsuits. That takes you back to the fundamental question: What kind of a legal system do you want in your state? Is it a legal system for small individual people, victims, or is it a legal system for insurance companies and for those who are required to pay out from the insurance companies?

**Q. Do you think Illinois municipalities or the state should look for an expansion of gambling to aid their budget situations?**

I would not recommend to any government that they depend upon gaming to balance their budget. If they're interested in gaming, I would say to them, "Look upon it as an extra." In my opinion, better that we didn't have gaming, but it's here. It's in adjoining states and so we have to learn to live with it.

If we had it to do all over again, I would have preferred a system where there would have been governmental ownership of all of the casinos, as happens in Canada, because then the profit goes to the government.

**Q. That said, how do you feel about city ownership of a casino? Do you think ownership should fall to an individual city or more to state ownership?**

It could be either one. The state could own it or a city, such as the city of Chicago, could own the casino. Having said that, my view on that would be that the ownership would be in the hands of the government, but the operation and the management would be done by a private company and, if possible under the law, require that it be a company that has a high standard of performance, and that probably means one of the companies coming out of Las Vegas.

**Q. Last year was the first time we saw memorandums of understanding, written budget agreements. Will they become commonplace in future budget negotiations?**

Going forward in the near future, yes. And that happened because of a broad, widespread distrust of the Blagojevich Administration, which they acknowledge, at least in private. And so, in the near term, you will see more and more memorandums of understanding.

**Q. Including outside the budget?**

I think it will happen whenever members of the legislature are interacting with the governor's office.

**Q. Will we see more of the coalition you formed with GOP leaders last year?**

I've told Rep. Cross and Sen. Watson that I plan to maintain the coalition. And let me add that coalition building on my part is nothing new. When I came back in as speaker in 1997, I provided that there would be Republicans serving as chairs of committees in the House. I've continued that practice ever since.

In my mind, the people of the state are not interested in useless, wasteful partisanship. They're interested in a good, solid work product coming out of a legislature, which is populated by people from both political parties. □

## Tom Cross

House  
Republican  
Leadership  
Minority Leader



*Cross is expected to begin a second term as minority leader this month. He has represented Oswego and the surrounding far-southwest suburbs since 1993.*

**Q. What issues would you like to see addressed during the spring session?**

I think we need to work on a school construction bond program. It's something we needed to do last fall. I think we need to continue to look at how we're going to fund education. And we need to look at a capital bill, separate from the school construction, a capital bill including roads. And I might have some ideas — I'm not going to elaborate now — but some more stuff involving the death penalty.

I just think there's a brand new General Assembly that wants to keep an eye on it. And to keep, just for me, a focus on keeping the budget in line and keeping spending down.

**Q. You mentioned education funding. As a suburban lawmaker, do you have concerns regarding school funding reform?**

You've got to make sure you have ongoing property tax relief. Two, you need to make sure that whatever funding stream we find, the formula's not altered to the detriment of the suburbs. It all boils down to an equity issue and balance between the suburbs and the rest of the state.

**Q. What do you see as your role in rebuilding the Republican Party?**

I think you can use our caucus as a starting point, along with the Senate caucus. We've had some successes.

## BRIEFLY

We have tried to reach out to young people in the state, get young people to run for legislative seats. We've tried to reach out to young people in terms of utilizing the Internet. What we've tried to focus on in our caucus is that there are issues that bring us together.

Are there issues out there that we all fight about? Yeah. But we also know at the end of the day that it's about jobs, it's about malpractice reform, it's about education, it's about transportation. And if we can find those issues that unite and not divide, we can have success as a party. And that's what I'm trying to do.

**Q. You mentioned the Internet. What's the goal? To build support with younger voters?**

Yeah, of course it is. There's a younger generation out there that gets their news and information about everything, not just politics, off the Internet, not watching Dan Rather or whomever. And so we think that's the way to attract people, and we've had a lot of successes. People are reading our Web site and participating in the blog and that's kind of neat.

It's just a different way to communicate. Some people read *Cosmopolitan*. Some people read *Glamour*. Some people look at the Internet.

**Q. Are Republicans losing their grip on the suburbs? Some say more suburbanites are voting Democratic. And Phil Crane, a GOP stalwart, was defeated by a Democrat. Is that a concern?**

Sure. Does it mean we've lost the suburbs? No. It means where we used to be able to take things somewhat for granted — and I don't even know that we took it for granted, I think that it was just a little easier to count on a Republican vote — I think we have our work cut out for us.

I think we have diversity in the suburbs that we didn't have 20 years ago, or even 10 years ago. You've got more single moms in the suburbs. You've got more ethnic groups in the suburbs. You've got Chicago folks in the suburbs. You've got women working in the suburbs, where 10 or 20, 30 years ago they didn't. It's just a different universe, and we have to adapt, strategywise, on attracting those people.

I don't think Phil Crane was about

whether or not the suburbs are Republican. You've got to know when to hang up your spikes. And I say that for members of the General Assembly as well, not just the U.S. Congress. He, unfortunately, had someone hang up his spikes for him, as opposed to hanging them up himself. And I stress that's not a criticism of him. It's just we all have a point when we need to know to hang it up.

**Q. You mentioned the budget. What do you make of the coalition you formed last year with Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate Republican Leader Frank Watson? Does it have staying power and is it relegated to the budget?**

It is hard to tell. I want to be committed to doing what's best for our caucus and our members and the people of the state of Illinois. Again, I want to focus on streamlining government. We cut the budget last year across the board at 4 percent for most agencies. I think that was good. I want to focus on education and the other things I've talked about. So, coalition or not, those are going to be my goals, and what's best for our caucus. I do think, at the end of the day, the budget last year was a good product, for whatever reasons. So, I'd like to get to that point again this year.

**Q. What are your thoughts on city ownership of a casino license?**

Well, I think that, as a Republican, you certainly worry about any type of city ownership and the building of more patronage workers. I have some concerns about that. I guess anytime you can just build up a bigger workforce, I don't like that.

But there are so many concerns about the casinos at this point. Do we really need to be expanding gaming in this state to the extent that people are talking about? Do we really need one in the south suburbs? Do we really need one in the north suburbs? Do we really need one downstate? So all those questions are just as important. How are we going to utilize the money? Are we going to put it toward education? Are we going to put it to tax reduction, a capital bill? There are so many unanswered questions that we really haven't even gotten to the ownership issues. □

## Emil Jones

Senate  
Democratic  
Leadership  
Senate President



Jones, a legislator since 1973, was elected to a second term as Senate president. He represents Chicago's far South Side and some south suburbs. He's a chief proponent of gambling expansion, touting it as a revenue source that could stave off further budget cuts.

**Q. What are the issues you'd like to address this session?**

I'd like to address the issue that is related to our capital program, our school construction, make sure schools around the state of Illinois have necessary support from the state through its bonding program so they can repair and build new schools as needed. I'd like to address a broader program as related to early childhood education.

**Q. You've been in the General Assembly since 1973. You just turned 69 last fall. Going into your second term as Senate president do you feel any personal pressure to create a legacy?**

When I came into the General Assembly, the number one issue then was the adequate funding of education. We passed that year, in 1973, the resource equalizer formula that funded education throughout the state of Illinois. Ever since that time, every year, adequate funding of education has been an issue. I've been at the forefront of trying to adequately fund education.

Hopefully, next year [2005] we will resolve that problem once and for all and relieve the burden of homeowners paying for education through property tax and shift it to a more equitable way of funding it, and that would be the state income tax. Hopefully, we can come to a resolve on that issue and equalize the funding of education across the state of Illinois so that all children will have



equal access to the public dollars being spent on education.

**Q.** *You've become a major proponent for a Chicago casino. Is that something you see as part of your legacy?*

We already have gaming in Illinois. It's just more or less parity. Gaming is a means with which we use the revenue that is generated to deal with issues of funding for social programs, capital programs, and it's not something new for us. It's already here. If Chicago gets gaming, then the revenue generated from that would help the entire state of Illinois.

Illinois loses a lot of money to Wisconsin and Indiana, so we can recapture those dollars if we had gaming in Chicago and the southern suburbs and Waukegan. We can recapture those dollars and keep them in the state of Illinois.

**Q.** *How much progress have we made toward eliminating the record \$5 billion budget deficit of two years ago?*

There have been significant cuts in the state budget. We made significant progress with our one-time revenue and some changes in the closing of tax loopholes, which generate a continuing flow of revenue, but we need a steady stream of revenue.

Our problem is not on the spending side. It's on the revenue side. We need an infusion of new revenue to deal with the budget. I'm strongly opposed to balancing the budget on the backs of the schoolchildren of Illinois, as well as the needy, particularly the elderly of the state. And so I'm for whatever it takes to get some continuing revenue to solve the problem.

**Q.** *Going back to last summer's budget negotiations, you're the one legislative leader aligned with the governor. What kind of relationship do you have with the governor?*

My alliance with the governor is one that, philosophically, we agree on the funding of early childhood education. We agree on increased funding for elementary and secondary education. We agree on expanding FamilyCare and KidCare.

And, coming from the other chamber, they wanted a no-growth formula for education, which would have been no additional dollars for the current fiscal year. That's where we disagree. So the governor and I happen to agree on the same issue. Had the House agreed that we're going to do education, we're going to take care of FamilyCare and KidCare, then we would have been on the same page.

So, after going through that long overtime session, we went in seeking approximately \$400 million in new spending for education. We ended up with \$389 million. We went in seeking \$20 million in additional money for early childhood education. We ended up with \$30 million for early childhood education. We went in seeking additional dollars for FamilyCare and KidCare and that remained the same.

What I'm saying to you, in essence, is that we went through all that overtime session to end up almost where we started.

**Q.** *Do you feel that you're given the respect that you deserve as a legislative leader? Do you feel you get as much respect as, say, House Speaker Michael Madigan, be it in the media or elsewhere?*

Let me put it this way to you: I've known Speaker Madigan for many years. Ten years I spent in the House with him. He has acquired quite a bit of knowledge. But everything has changed now. At one point he was the only Democrat in the state that Democrats could go to. Now they have myself and the governor to go to. So it's a shared responsibility.

**Q.** *The speaker and the GOP leaders say their coalition will continue. Do you expect another struggle on the budget?*

I'm a Democrat. I believe in helping Democrat elected officials. I don't mind working with my other colleagues, but I'm not going to involve myself in a conspiracy to hurt the schoolchildren and the poor and the elderly of this state.

You must have the courage to find the revenue and do the right thing. I don't like to get involved in anything that's being obstructive. □

## Frank Watson

Senate  
Republican  
Leadership  
Minority Leader



*Watson, a 31-year legislative veteran, was elected minority leader in 2003 and likely will start another term this month. Watson has fought to rein in state debt and reform medical malpractice laws. He hails from downstate Greenville.*

**Q.** *What issues would you like to see addressed in the spring session?*

Well, other than the budget, this last year I thought medical malpractice was the second-most important thing that needed to be dealt with. Unfortunately, the session came and went. We're going to continue to put pressure on to get something that's meaningful, long-term and solves the problem of the cost of medical malpractice insurance and keeps doctors in Illinois.

It's not a crisis stage, I guess, throughout the state, or we'd see more of an interest in something being done from the leadership here: the governor, the speaker of the House, the president of the Senate. But once it reaches that same crisis state that we're experiencing in the Metro East area, Carbondale, Will County [and] Lake County, something will finally be done.

**Q.** *How does the Republican victory in the 5th District Illinois Supreme Court race affect the issue?*

It sends a huge message. That was the issue in the race, other than the fact that Lloyd Karmeier is just a quality, classy person who was an outstanding judge in his own right. He deserved the election just based on that. But medical malpractice became a part of it. And Gordon Maag tried to grab it. He tried to get hold of it, too, and all this advertising that he did, material that he sent out, but it didn't stick. It didn't work because the funding for his campaign came from the very

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people who are opposed to anything that would be significant. So it was a referendum on medical malpractice, that race.

**Q.** *Can you call the race a referendum on medical malpractice when the most visible campaign ads had to do with the two candidates' records on sex offenders?*

Deep down, the issue was the people of southern Illinois, where they see doctors leaving their communities, and the access, not only the quality, but basic access to health care being impacted because of the physicians leaving the state.

To me, that was the driving issue. I think there was a lot of confusion. People watched the ads. They didn't really understand. And then, of course, it started to come out that the level of campaign advertising had reached a very questionable level by the bar association and others. So I think people tuned those out.

**Q.** *How much progress has the state made toward eliminating what was being called a record \$5 billion budget deficit two years ago?*

We've made some progress, but only because I think we went into extra session days. This coming session, we're going to have to deal with the whole issue again. That's been an issue and a contention I've had since day one. The first call I made to the governor, [I said] "We have a \$5 billion deficit. I want to work with you. I want to be part of the solution. I'm in the minority. I know what that means. The only thing I ask is no new programs, no new spending." He trots out his first budget two years ago of more programs, more new spending, and we just took an exception to that and have been arguing that ever since.

**Q.** *Last year, the governor wanted to close prisons in Vandalia, St. Charles and Pontiac. Will we see proposed closing of state facilities in Republican territory again this year?*

I would be very surprised. Ironically, all three of those prisons you mentioned were in Republican Senate districts. Of

course, the governor didn't know where they were, you know. But, no, I'd be surprised if he took that direction again. I think he lost that battle and he lost it big time, both in the legislature and in the public. And I think that he doesn't want to go through that again.

Nor do I. And we've had that conversation privately, the governor and I. So I feel comfortable he is not going to target anything such as Vandalia, Pontiac or St. Charles. There may be other facilities out there. It might be you tomorrow, that kind of thing. So beware. But I don't think he'll go down that same path again, especially if we are able, and it looks like we are, to maintain this coalition of the speaker, myself and Tom Cross.

**Q.** *What is the staying power of that coalition? Is it strictly budget-related, since the two parties have different ideals when it comes to other subjects?*

There are some differences, no doubt about it, medical malpractice being one of them. But I think a lot of good public policy came from those 54 days of overtime. We, unfortunately, had to have 60-some memorandums of understanding signed by the governor. That's not the way I'd like to do business. That's the way we think we have to with this administration.

The road fund diversions were brought to a halt. The debt responsibility act, which we think is excellent public policy, the facility closure act, those kinds of issues all came out of that 54-day extension and were cooperative efforts between the leaders, without, of course, the president of the Senate and the governor.

I think those will serve the people well for a long time, and I see no reason why [the coalition would end]. And I think the speaker feels the same way.

**Q.** *Are memorandums of understanding going to become common practice for agreements legislators have with the governor?*

I think until they prove that they can be trusted and do the things that they've committed to do. That's what brought about the memorandums of understanding. That's the only reason. □



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## SOYBEAN RUST IS HERE

### Dreaded fungus has reached U.S. soil

January is unlikely to be restful for Illinois soybean growers. Normally a time to relax, regroup and plot out the spring planting season, this winter brings news that farmers will need to learn all they can about *Phakopsora pachyrhizi*. This fungus, known as soybean rust, can cause up to an 80 percent reduction in yields if it goes undetected and untreated.

In early November, diagnosticians at the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed the presence of soybean rust on leaf samples collected from areas in Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida, the first time the fungus has been found in North America. By mid-month, it had spread to Alabama and Georgia, and by the first of December it was reported in southeastern Missouri.

Illinois' crop had already been harvested, and the fungus cannot survive the northern winter.

Soybean rust is a wind-borne disease thought to have caught a ride to our shores with Ivan, the September hurricane that hit the Gulf of Mexico coast. The disease is characterized by reddish brown lesions on soybean plants that make leaves drop off early, inhibiting the growth of pods.

The Asian fungus has spread from that continent to Australia, India, Africa and Latin America, devastating crops along the way.

In the 1999-2000 season, soybean rust was discovered in Brazil, the world's second-largest soybean producer behind the United States. This year, that South American country lost 4.5 million tons of soybeans and may lose another 4.8 million tons next year, Agriculture Minister Roberto Rodrigues stated in an October news release.

Illinois is this country's largest grower of soybeans. The state had a record yield in 2004, based on estimates as of November 1, of 50 bushels an acre, which translates to a statewide total of 493 million bushels. Last year's yield was 374 million bushels.

The disease can be controlled through early detection and spraying with fungicide. The Illinois Department of Agriculture last spring requested conditional approval of 10 commercial products to be added to the three that have been available to fight soybean rust. Six of those 10 have been approved for use in the field by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"I expect all will be approved for use by spring planting," says Glen Hartman, an associate professor of crop sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a USDA research plant

pathologist who began studying soybean rust at its source in Asia. "One thing we've learned from watching Brazil [fight the fungus] is that it is controllable."

Hartman is part of a team working with Monsanto and other companies to find a soybean strain that is genetically resistant to the rust. "We've made a lot of progress in the last three years," he says.

However, as of now, all soybeans are susceptible to the disease. Hartman says scientists won't be able to tell Illinois farmers anything definite about whether, when or how bad soybean rust will hit. Computer modeling tells them spring storms likely will blow the spores up tornado alley from the Gulf three out of four years and 75 percent of soybeans will be affected. But, he says, they won't know definitively until "we have some history" to analyze.

For now, the state ag department is organizing seminars for farmers to give them information about soybean rust and how to apply fungicides, a broad-based procedure farmers don't normally do. Further, fungicide companies will have time to adjust production schedules to meet higher demand.

"If there is any good news in this," says Jeff Squibb, ag department spokesman, "it is that we have the winter to prepare."

*Beverley Scobell*

*Photographs courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture*



*The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates soybean rust could cause \$640 million to \$1.3 billion in domestic net economic losses in the first year of an outbreak, which is likely this year, and between \$240 million and \$2 billion in subsequent years. The Illinois Department of Agriculture outlines its Soybean Rust Program on its Web site at [www.agr.state.il.us](http://www.agr.state.il.us).*



## When is a garden a work of art?

Life may imitate art, but a Chicago artist has filed a lawsuit claiming that, in his case, life is art. The living artwork is “Wildflowers Works 1,” the 1.5-acre Grant Park garden Chapman Kelley first planted 21 years ago. Filed in U.S. District Court, Chapman’s suit claims that the Chicago Park District drastically altered his work last summer, dramatically reducing its size and destroying its artistic integrity.

“They basically mutilated it. And it’s no longer his work of art,” says Richard Balough, Kelley’s attorney.

The lawsuit is being brought under the federal Visual Artists Rights Act, which was written to protect murals, sculptures and other works of public art. Balough believes this is the first instance when an artist has sought redress for a garden.

The garden, in Daley Bicentennial Plaza at the northeast edge of Grant Park, was scaled back to make room for the pedestrian bridge that now connects the plaza with Millennium Park. A park district spokeswoman says Kelley could have opposed the changes at a public hearing last summer.

The Visual Artists Rights Act provides for statutory compensation of \$150,000, plus legal fees. Kelley could seek additional damages for breach of contract. The artist says he spent at least \$80,000 on initial wildflower seedlings in 1984.

*Pat Guinane*

## Judge calls business fee hikes unconstitutional

A Cook County trial judge struck down fee increases Gov. Rod Blagojevich imposed on Illinois companies to fund improvements in the workers’ compensation system and boost the state’s coffers.

Cook County Circuit Judge Patrick McGann ruled the fee hikes were unfair — and illegal under the Illinois Constitution — because they arbitrarily targeted businesses while fees for other consumers went unchanged. Under the state charter, tax laws determining who should be subject to taxes or fees “shall be reasonable and the subjects and objects within each class shall be taxed uniformly.”

McGann said the legislature’s decision to raise 300 fees, but not 1,200 others, was not “uniform” and he rejected an argument that the businesses were targeted because they would be most able to pay. He noted the increase in the workers’ compensation fee affected all businesses, including huge companies, mom-and-pop shops, churches, private schools and not-for-profit corporations such as the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, which filed the lawsuit.

The judge determined the fees weren’t “reasonable” either because they brought in twice as much money as the state needed to run the Illinois Workers’ Compensation Commission, formerly the Illinois Industrial Commission, the agency in charge of workers’ compensation cases. In fact, he pointed out, lawmakers gave Blagojevich’s budget director authority to use the excess money for other purposes.

In 2003, lawmakers added a 1.5 percent surcharge to employers’ insurance premiums and a fee for self-insured employers. The hikes brought in \$30.8 million, compared to the \$13.7 million it cost the state to run the workers’ compensation system.

McGann ordered the money collected from the fee to be set aside in a special account while legal proceedings continue in the case.

His ruling has no immediate effect on the hundreds of other fee hikes championed by Blagojevich during the 2003 legislative session. But chamber president Douglas Whitley says he hopes lawmakers will pay attention to the decision.

“Our hope is that this well-reasoned decision will prevent lawmakers — in Illinois and across the nation — from abusing their power by using excessive fee increases to supplement general revenue funds, which should be generated by taxes paid by all taxpayers,” he says.

An appeal could go straight to the Illinois Supreme Court because McGann struck down a state law, but the attorney general’s office was still weighing its options in mid-December.

*Daniel C. Vock*  
Chicago Daily Law Bulletin

## SERVES EX-INMATES

### Health department takes HIV pilot project statewide

The Illinois Department of Public Health will fund a statewide initiative aimed at stemming the spread of HIV by treating infected former state prisoners.

Between 2000 and 2004, 1,287 former inmates in Chicago who were HIV-infected received medicine and social services through the Chicago Health Department. That support was provided under a \$1 million-a-year pilot project funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the federal Health Resources and Services Administration.

When the pilot project ended, the Illinois Department of Public Health agreed to provide \$250,000 a year to take the project statewide. As a result, the directors of the initiative will cut the number of cases they can manage and explore ways to expand services beyond Cook County.

Project Director Tamara Cox says partnerships with such organizations as the AIDS Foundation of Chicago enable service providers to exchange information on infected inmates. If case workers in one organization are unable to help, former inmates can be referred to others for medical care, legal services and housing options.

A disproportionate number of former Illinois inmates return to Chicago. “Nine out of the 10 people who are released come back to Chicago,” says Cox. “But that one person going to Danville, Cairo or wherever should have access to the same services that Chicago is getting.”

As the project is expanded, directors will focus on helping downstate communities with technical advice. Cox says, “We’ve had five years of experience, so we can hit the ground running with this. We’re going to take this on the road to help others get collaborations started.”

*Rikeesha Cannon*

**CIVICS BY THE NUMBER****97 percent**

U.S. adults polled in favor of civics ed

**450**

Illinois AmeriCorps volunteers

**1789**

Year of the first American election

**1920**

U.S. women got the right to vote

**1971**

Year U.S. voting age dropped to 18

**\$5 an hour**

Cap on fee to teach immigrants civics

**11**

Years Illinois Youth Summit has run

**1,500+**

Illinois high schoolers join each year

**25**

Folks on state panel on volunteerism

**42 percent**

U.S. youth voter turnout in 2000

**51.6 percent**

U.S. youth voter turnout in 2004

**UPDATES**

- Proponents of Soldier Field's National Historic Landmark status got a reprieve. The National Park System Advisory Board asked its Landmarks Committee to reconsider a unanimous recommendation to strip the Chicago stadium of its historic designation (see *Illinois Issues*, December, page 9).

- Officials from the United States and Canada, including Gov. Rod Blagojevich, signed a plan to protect the supply of water and preserve the ecology of the Great Lakes, which hold 95 percent of the surface fresh water in North America (see *Illinois Issues*, July/August, page 31).

- Congress postponed making a final decision on the proposed \$7.7 billion expansion of locks and dams on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers (see *Illinois Issues*, July/August, page 26).

**States face challenges on education spending**

About half the states, including Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Texas, face lawsuits contending school spending is inadequate, according to a recent analysis in the December edition of *Governing* magazine.

"These adequacy suits are quite different from the 'equity' suits that compelled some states ... to rewrite their school finance formulas in the 1970s, '80s and '90s," wrote Dennis Farney. "Equity suits were about dividing up the education pie in a fairer way. Adequacy suits are about getting a bigger pie — considerably bigger."

The suits, which challenge the constitutionality of school spending, contend their states don't spend enough to ensure that all students can meet reasonable goals, he wrote.

In New York, for instance, legislators missed a July 30 court deadline to carry out an order to hike that state's school spending. So the state appointed three special masters — lawyers who work for that state's supreme court — to come up with a solution.

Plaintiffs in Missouri argue that state needs to spend \$900 million more to meet the edicts of the 1993 Outstanding Schools Act. In January 2004, a committee sued, charging that "the funding system distributes money unequally among districts even as it holds all districts to the same level of performance and accountability."

In Ohio, meanwhile, that state's high court effectively reversed its decision to address adequacy of school funding.

Nevertheless, wrote Farney, "It's possible that the adequacy suits could ultimately be the catalyst for broader education reforms."

They could also be expensive for the states.

**REPORTS*****Teen poverty***

The Illinois Poverty Summit's 2004 report has found increasing poverty among teens.

Between 1900 and 2000, according to the report, poverty among people between the ages of 12 and 17 increased in 34 Illinois counties. An estimated 175,000 teens in Illinois are living in what is categorized as "deep poverty," in a family with an income of four digits or lower.

The poverty summit is a diverse group of political, business and nonprofit leaders that produces an annual study funded by foundations, including the Joyce Foundation, the Woods Fund of Chicago and the Chicago Community Trust. The focus on teen poverty is the result of a project coordinated by the Mid-America Institute on Poverty of the Chicago-based Heartland Alliance.

"Poverty among youth is increasing, and many teens exhibit high-risk behavior that predicts lifelong poverty," wrote Heartland Alliance Director Amy Rynell in a letter accompanying the report. "These findings illustrate the cycle of poverty from which it is very difficult to escape."

According to the report, an estimated 26,000 youth in Illinois are homeless, and the actual number is believed to be much higher.

***School crime***

School violence is on the decline, according to a recent report by the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics.

Among the findings in the report: Victimization rates for students ages 12 to 18 generally declined between 1992 and 2002; and between 1993 and 2003, the percentage of high school students who reported being in a fight declined from 42 percent to 33 percent.

The report was based on a number of statistical analyses, including the National Crime Victimization Survey from 1992 to 2002 and the federal Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted between 1993 and 2003.



## PRESSBOX

*The Associated Press* reported that dollars that were to be used to protect investors from scams were dumped into the state's general funds.

Investment fraud penalties paid by Wall Street firms added up to \$16 million in the past two years, AP reporter John O'Connor wrote, but according to records the state has spent that money on routine government services.

Those dollars constitute Illinois' share of national and state settlements with firms that were accused of misleading investors by embellishing market research favoring certain companies, O'Connor noted.

One agreement between the state and Merrill Lynch required Illinois to use the \$2.1 million settlement to "promote public awareness of the dangers of securities fraud," O'Connor reported.

This money, along with other settlement monies, was deposited into state accounts for securities enforcement and investor education, "but lawmakers and Gov. Rod Blagojevich transferred it into general spending to help balance the state budget," according to AP's review of secretary of state and comptroller records.

State Rep. James Brosnahan, an Evergreen Park Democrat, told O'Connor, "It's very tempting to raid these funds to fill our budget gap. But if you look at the big picture, most, if not all, of that money we received should be specially earmarked for investment education or something along those lines."

A Blagojevich spokeswoman told AP that state law permits money from special funds to be transferred for other uses.

Illinois was included in 2003 in the \$1.4 billion settlement involving 10 top investment firms and such regulators as the federal Securities and Exchange Commission and New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. Penalties set aside for each state added up to nearly \$488 million.

The case focused on analysts who allegedly supplied investors with exaggerated stock ratings in hopes of winning investment banking business from the companies issuing the stocks.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported that a former state budget office aide got a \$20,000 state contract for work already done by a state agency.

Brian Fimple, an aide to Budget Director John Filan, left his job in July and then got a contract to do casino revenue forecasts, work already performed by the Illinois Gaming Board, *Tribune* reporter Ray Long wrote.

Gaming board officials told Long they weren't consulted about hiring Fimple but are required to cover the cost of his contract for work staff has already been doing for years. Fimple's no-bid contract was awarded by the Illinois Department of Revenue, according to the *Tribune*.

Aides to Gov. Rod Blagojevich told Long the deal doesn't violate the "revolving door" provision of a new ethics law Blagojevich championed. That law bars state workers from jumping quickly to private-sector jobs in industries they had overseen.

*New York Times* reporter Stephen Kinzer wrote that Springfield's new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is bound to generate controversy.

"Nearly a century and a half after [Lincoln's] death, his hometown is honoring him with what promises to be a spectacular and perhaps controversial museum."

Kinzer noted the "museum and adjoining library will house one of the finest collections of Lincoln documents and memorabilia. There will also be cannons that emit smoke, a theater whose seats will shake when battle scenes are shown on screen, and dozens of life-size figures of Lincoln and his contemporaries."

Of museum director Richard Norton

Smith, Kinzer wrote, "Critics fear that in his desire to appeal to children and others who are unfamiliar with Lincoln, he is sacrificing the authenticity and decorum that the Great Emancipator deserves."

In Kinzer's estimation, "No one passing through Springfield will be able to ignore the imposing new complex. The library, which opened [in October], and the museum, which is to open in April, are the most ambitious public buildings this city of 110,000 has erected in generations. The complex, including a visitors' center and a parking garage, cost \$150 million. Federal, state and local governments paid the bill."

*The State Journal-Register* in Springfield reported that almost half of the governor's security team was directed to other tasks after complaints about the size of the detail and the behavior of some of its members.

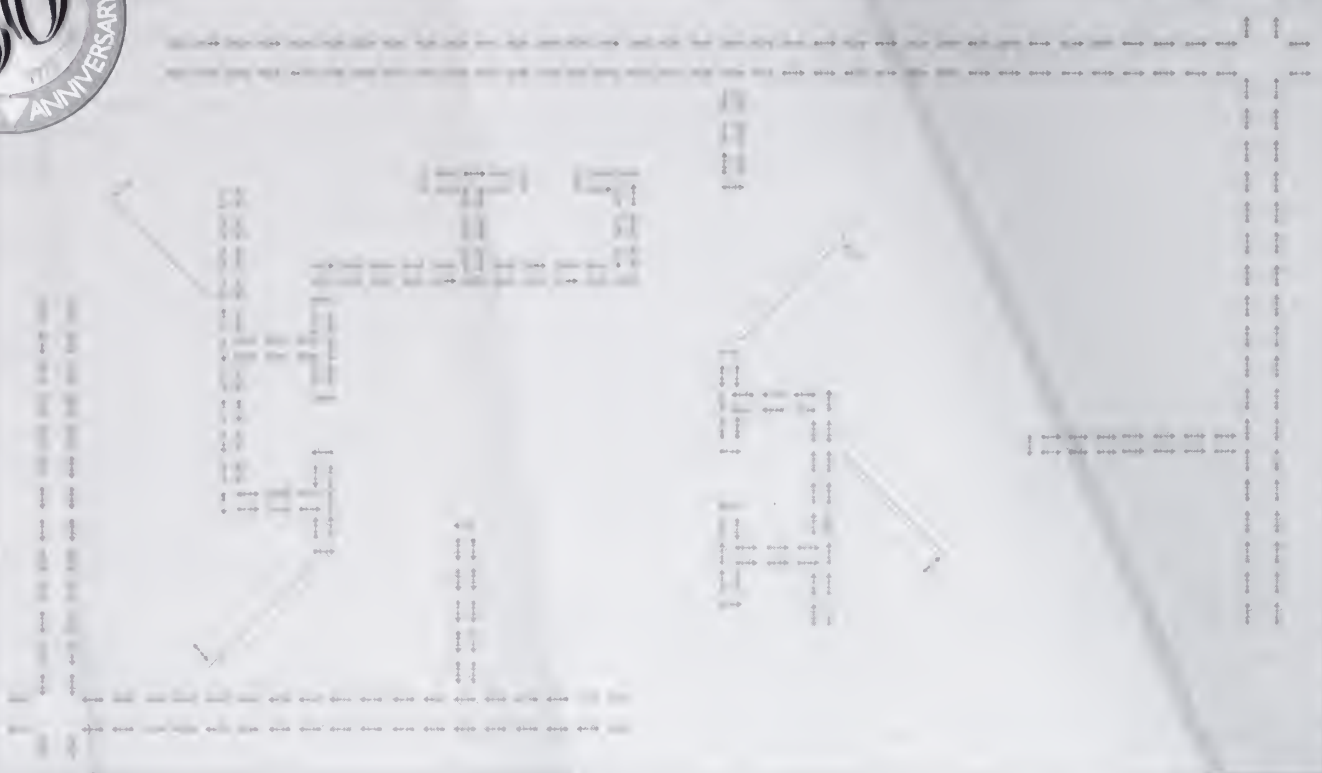
Reporter Doug Finke wrote that 40 percent of the 38 officers previously assigned to the governor have been reassigned to front-line duties such as patrolling highways.

The detail drew criticism after WLS television in Chicago reported that Blagojevich took a dozen bodyguards and six state vehicles to the Democratic National Convention in Boston last summer.

Among other complaints registered about the detail, Finke reported, was that an officer's state police gun was stolen from his car while he was attending a boxing match in Los Angeles.

Finke wrote that Blagojevich announced "he would make changes to his security detail in the wake of the television reports. He pledged to cut the detail to fewer than 30 people, limit their out-of-state travel, improve their training and have them adhere to a new code of conduct."

The Illinois State Police also is investigating the allegations of misconduct, according to the newspaper.



# PLANNING FOR ILLINOIS' FUTURE

Why can't politicians behave like the  
work-for-tomorrow ant instead of the  
live-in-the-moment grasshopper?

APPROVED BY:



DRAWN BY

REVISED

DRAWING NUMBER



Why is Illinois borrowing to pay state operating expenses? Will the state employee pension system be solvent after those early retirement deals? How will the state close the budget deficit?

Illinois hasn't been the only state to face long-term fiscal and policy crises in recent years. Remember California's energy shut-down? Who could forget Florida's ballot debacles? And now every state seems to be grappling with a shortage of flu vaccine.

Why can't government plan for such events? Why can't the states think ahead, anticipate problems and attack them before they get out of hand? These are questions that might occur to anyone over coffee and the morning newspaper.

And, in fact, journalists, political commentators and academics are enamored of planning. Setting goals and priorities and allocating resources appeals to the rational mind. Americans like to believe that public problems can be dealt with in a straightforward, workaday manner. As Ross Perot liked to say, "Let's just look under the hood, see what's wrong and fix it!" So why can't government do just that?

Of course, a lot of planning does go on in state government. Just as in the private sector, "strategic planning" is all the rage in state agencies these days. This follows a long line of trendy approaches to planning and management that have come and gone over the years. Zero-based Budgeting, Management by Objectives and Planning, Programming and Budgeting Systems, among many other catch phrases and programs, have all had their day. Some of these planning strategies have left a mark on the way government operates.

For example, state government regularly accomplishes a good deal of planning through an elaborate budgeting process. In fact, for the past six months, officials at the University of Illinois, where I work, have been deeply involved in the development of a budget from which we can't spend a penny until July 1, 2006. Planning also can be seen in "rainy day" funds, highway and capital building project goals and estimates of future prison populations, to name a few.

Furthermore, the private sector probably doesn't do as much planning as some

government critics seem to believe.

Let's face it. Planning is tough. Sometimes it takes all of our energy to get through today and maybe think a little bit about tomorrow. But next week? Maybe we'll get to that later. This is especially the case for government when it is stretched thin by budget cuts and increased demands. "Doing less with more" and "trimming the bloated bureaucracy" often mean focusing only on the most pressing day-to-day service needs and putting such luxuries as planning on hold until a better day, which may never come. Think about how tough it is to plan a family budget — especially when times are tough, with maybe one spouse out of work and the kids suddenly needing braces. That's where state government is today.

But, that said, there's no doubt state government has an especially difficult time planning ahead. There are several reasons for this. First, our political system doesn't give policy-makers much incentive to plan. The frequency with which we elect state officials gives them a very clear time horizon, and that horizon is short. Every four years, Illinois' governor, other statewide officials and most state senators face a re-election campaign or a new job. State representatives face re-election every two years. In other words, state officials are working under short-term, renewable contracts with frequent performance evaluations by their bosses — the voters. These policy-makers have no electoral incentive to make decisions that would benefit the state in, say, 10 years, at the expense of another decision that might bring benefits next year.

Thus, if politicians behave like the live-in-the-moment grasshopper, as opposed to the work-for-tomorrow ant, it may be, in large part, because the political system encourages them to do so. Of course, politicians have a moral and professional obligation to work for the long-term good of the state, and most of them take this obligation seriously. But when the choice is between a short-term benefit for the state that will get them re-elected and a long-term benefit that may result in their being tossed from office, long-term planning generally gets short shrift.

Even in such a system, political parties and their leaders might be able to take the

long-term view, developing plans to present to the electorate, who might then choose which direction to pursue. Parties could conceivably, in taking a broader, longer view, enable policy planning and more coherent policy strategies. Legislators come and go, but parties remain, and so they can and should plan ahead, so the argument goes. In Westminster-style parliamentary systems, this is precisely what happens. But even in such a parliament, a turnover in party control can wreak havoc on government planning. Tony Blair and the Labour Party can plan and implement any policy they wish because they currently control the British government. But what happens if Labour loses its majority next year and is replaced by the Conservative Party? Suddenly, all the plans of Labour are thrown out the window, and new, Conservative plans are implemented. Just because a plan exists doesn't mean better planning happens. Is switching erratically from one long-term plan to another better than having no plan at all?

Aside from the disincentives for planning that are set up by the structure of state government, public policy planning is hard simply because public problems are, well, hard. If they were easy, someone in the private sector would have figured out how to solve them and make money doing so. How do we stop people from abusing drugs? How do we educate children? How do we encourage the unemployed to work, and how do we care for those who can't or won't work? How do we discourage people from committing crimes? These are questions that humans have long pondered, and there is no reason to believe that we are going to answer them definitively any time soon.

There are two levels on which these public problems are hard.

First, it's tough just to reach a consensus on common policy goals for many public problems. For example, how do we help poor, single mothers? Do we get them a job? Do we encourage them to be stay-at-home moms? Do we try to stop single women from having babies in the first place? Maybe we do all these things. Prioritizing these goals is difficult, and some of them may actually be incompatible.

Second, even if we can reach a

consensus on the policy goal for a particular public problem, there is usually honest debate about the effectiveness of various policies in achieving that goal. Say we agree that the state should adopt the long-term goal of reducing single motherhood. Will sex education achieve this goal? What should we teach in a sex education class? Who should take these classes? Some argue that sex education discourages single motherhood, while others argue that sex education actually encourages it. Will providing young women with contraceptives reduce single motherhood? How about providing young men with contraceptives? If we encourage single people to “just say no,” will that reduce the number of babies born out of wedlock? New policy ideas are always risky, and even old ones are rarely proven unambiguously to be effective. Furthermore, public policy very often has unintended consequences that we won’t know about until it is put into effect.

This uncertainty about the potential effects of public policy makes policy-makers reluctant to undertake major policy changes and long-range planning. Rarely is it persuasive to argue on the floor of the Illinois General Assembly that a bill is a “bold new policy that will fundamentally change the way government addresses this public problem.” The obvious, and very effective, counterarguments are: If this idea is so good, how come no one ever thought of it before? How do you know it will do what you say? What other problems will this policy cause? Thus, the bias is toward preferring the status quo, or something very close to it. This is true not only for elected officials, who have succeeded in the current system and so see little reason to change it, but also for most citizens, who often prefer the devil they know to the devil they don’t.

Political scientists have a word for the kind of policy-making that results from this environment: incrementalism. Policy-makers do not soberly assess all the current and predicted problems of the state and then rationally evaluate the pros and cons of the full range of potential policy solutions. They don’t have the electoral incentive to be so rational and far-sighted, even if that were humanly possible. Rather, taking 98 percent of what the state does currently as a given, policy-makers consider only how incremental policy changes might help the state do what it

does just a little bit better. After all, the current policy regime — represented by the existing budget, laws, administrative rules and unofficial norms of behavior for government officials — embodies countless decisions, compromises and judgments that have been made since the state was founded. It might, in fact, be seen as audacious to make major changes in such a system. Presumably, these past decisions had some merit, and we should change them only with good reason.

Incremental policy-making also is supported by those people and groups, in and out of government, who benefit from the status quo. For example, last year, the governor proposed closing the state prison at Vandalia and relocating those prisoners to newer and, arguably, more cost-efficient prisons. While this proposal did not result from a careful planning process, it is the kind of decision that could have. But what happened when this change — a fairly nonincremental, although certainly not radical, policy shift — was proposed? The politicians, citizens and prison workers from Vandalia and surrounding communities who would have been adversely affected by the closure mobilized and fought hard to stop it. And they succeeded. It is always easier for people to notice the immediate damage done to them by taking something away than for those who might gain something in the future to recognize those potential benefits. So those who are hurt by planning and policy change will always work harder than those who might be helped by it. Thus, taking the path of least resistance, policy-makers avoid long-range planning and change, preferring small shifts in policy that don’t offend too many people.

In general, then, long-range government policy planning is especially difficult because of uncertainty — and the fear of it. Policy-makers are uncertain about how new policies will work and about their political implications. They also are uncertain about how conditions will change, even without a change in policy. What new public problems might arise unexpectedly? What public problems might resolve themselves if things are just left alone? Because policy-makers must face the electorate frequently, they are especially afraid of uncertainty and unwilling to wait for the long-term benefits that may (or may not) result from policy planning and change.

Are state government policy-makers fundamentally incapable of long-range policy planning? Is such planning just a utopian dream of academics and other impractical thinkers? Maybe. But that doesn’t mean government shouldn’t make efforts to think further into the future than the next election. After all, the public problems that policy-makers are charged with solving typically are long-term and can’t be solved next week or even next year. In many cases, they can’t ever be completely “solved,” but they might be ameliorated with close, concerted government attention. Public problems such as education funding, poverty and maintaining roads and bridges are chronic, like diabetes, rather than acute, like a broken leg. We must strive to improve them, even if we cannot cure them. Indeed, these chronic public problems may be the ones most amenable to planning. Establishing institutions with a longer-term perspective to monitor these problems and suggest policy changes may help.

But just as important, voters must give policy-makers the incentive to think long term. Cynical thinking to the contrary, politicians respond amazingly well to the well-articulated desires of voters. If we think longer term as voters — in terms of the campaign appeals that we respond to, the people we elect and the contacts we have with policy-makers once they are in office — our representatives will think longer term.

This may be difficult when a brother’s state job is cut, or taxes are raised or a program that helps the wife’s business is changed. But if we are willing to accept policies that are short-sighted, that is what we will get. It should not be a surprise that, in a country where the savings rate is among the lowest in the industrialized world and many people balance their budgets by maxing out their credit cards, we get a state government that, when faced with major financial problems, solves them, at least in part, by borrowing money and selling off state assets to pay for current operations.

We get the government we ask for. If we want ants running state government, we need to stop electing grasshoppers. □

*Christopher Z. Mooney is a professor of political studies with the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Springfield.*





# Campus corps

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Illinois institutions are striving to tie  
volunteerism into the collegiate experience

by Theresa Grimaldi Olsen

Jenna Hania, a sophomore at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, joined some 17 other students and traveled to the state Capitol in Springfield last February armed with 150 water bottles that carried this message: "The village of Robbins Illinois needs your help for their emergency water and sewer needs. Thank you for your consideration."

A month earlier, Hania and Jocelyn Black, a Trinity senior, showed state and federal representatives a

PowerPoint presentation detailing evidence of the crumbling infrastructure in Robbins, a village in Chicago's south suburbs that is one of the poorest municipalities in the state. Of the 6,600 residents in Robbins, 35.5 percent fell below the federal poverty level when the 2000 U.S. Census was taken, which was then \$13,290 in annual income for a family of three.

Black and Hania spent hours of volunteer time gathering information and

packaging the presentation documenting Robbins' need for more than \$10 million to improve its deteriorating road, water and sewer systems.

And that isn't the only project these college students are working on in Robbins, which is located about three miles from Trinity. They also have written grants, worked in city hall, helped clean up streets after a festival and are beginning a program to mentor young people.

# Civics 101

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Illinois' standards for teaching students  
how to be good citizens fail national tests

by Chris Wetterich

More young people voted in the 2004 presidential election than in any since 18-year-olds gained the right to vote in 1971, possibly signaling the end of a long trend of disengagement from public affairs by American youth. But experts remain skeptical that primary and secondary schools are adequately preparing young people to fulfill their civic duties, and studies show Illinois is among states that have the weakest standards for educating future citizens.

Advocates for civic education argue that participation in a democratic society results from knowledge of the principles on which the United States was founded. The higher the level of education, the greater the likelihood of voting, says Robert Bradley, a resident scholar at the Illinois Institute for Civic Education at Illinois State University in Normal.

"A democracy," he says, "is as safe as the number of informed citizens you have. If citizens start taking things for

granted, you start having the impulses for nondemocratic things to take place."

The real test for young people, Bradley says, will be whether they are engaged in state and local elections, which arguably can affect their lives as much as, or more than, a national election.

In fact, American democracy was grounded in the idea that in order for it to work, citizens had to be fully engaged in the daily actions of those who governed them, wrote Paul Gagnon in a 2003 study

The Robbins project represents Trinity Christian College's commitment to civic engagement, the term for the program on university and college campuses designed to encourage students to become involved in society. "It's education for citizenship," says Steven Timmermans, Trinity's president. "Colleges and universities must model what it means to be a good partner. We are partnering with Robbins to make a real difference. We are marshalling all our efforts in one direction."

Trinity Christian College is one of 35 members of the Illinois Campus Compact, a coalition of public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities, which supports the development of students as active and engaged members of the community. The Illinois group affiliated in 1993 with the national Campus Compact, which was founded 20 years ago by the presidents of Brown, Georgetown and Stanford universities and the president of the Education Commission of the States, a nonprofit organization based Denver, Colo. The national compact now has a network of offices in 30 states, and a membership of more than 900 public and private colleges and universities.

There's a push in higher education to be more intentional in connecting learning with the community, says Jeffrey Maras, assistant dean for students/community

development at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

"Higher education has moved out of the ivory tower concept to where we are a part of the community in which we live," says Kathy Engelken, executive director of Illinois Campus Compact, a nonprofit organization.

Trinity's Timmermans is one of five university presidents in Illinois who have received Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation fellowships to link their campuses to community projects. Civic engagement blends with the purpose of Trinity Christian College, Timmermans says. "Our mission is to shape lives to participate responsibly in the world."

Civic engagement represents the core of the missions of most universities and colleges, whether they are public or private, Engelken says.

The expectation at universities now is for teaching, research and service to the broader community, says Howard Rosing of DePaul University in Chicago. Rosing is the assistant director for academic development at that university's Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning & Community Service Studies.

The new expectation, he says, has created challenges, especially for such universities as DePaul that exist adjacent to low-income, underserved

neighborhoods. "There is kind of a crisis in higher education of how universities can become more relevant to the community around them, especially at the urban-based universities," he says. "Service-learning and/or university-community partnerships in general at least partially seek to resolve it."

The campus movement to promote civic engagement began in the 1980s when university students started wrestling with hunger and homelessness as important community issues and built cardboard shelters on their campus quads, says Engelken of the Illinois Compact. The shelters represented a need, but few students became involved in the organization to stimulate real change. Campus Compact was founded with the idea that more would become involved with the proper encouragement and supportive services.

"Students are the groundswell that gets institutions to move to another level," Engelken says. "We are building civic skills and raising awareness of students to be good college citizens. We try to help students not just to volunteer but to be involved in the community as members in politics or the YMCA."

Maras of UIS says civic rewards can be very satisfying. "We have seen it make a real positive impact," he says. "Students who are actively involved in the community have a higher quality

of state civic standards for the American Federation of Teachers and the Albert Shanker Institute.

"Since our nation's birth, the prime reason for free public education in a common school has been to nurture politically perceptive, committed citizens," Gagnon wrote. "Thomas Jefferson argued that each of us should be equipped to make our own decisions on what would 'secure or endanger' our freedom."

But research points to public school systems across the country that are failing at this mission. For years, anecdotal and scientific surveys have piled up showing that many Americans don't know much about how their government works, who represents them in Congress, state legislatures and local governments, or even why

democracy is important.

"Just turn on the news and you will find somebody being interviewed, a state senator or a celebrity or a talking head. They might try to cite the Constitution and they use it incorrectly. They don't have any idea what they're talking about," says Nancy Salvato, a consultant with Prism Educational Consulting who has researched civic education in Illinois.

The last time America's students were tested on the fundamentals of American government, 35 percent of high school seniors failed. The 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress also showed that only 26 percent of seniors had proficient knowledge of the workings of government. And only 9 percent were able to give two reasons why it is vital for

citizens to be engaged in a democratic society. That test was given nationwide to representative samples of 22,000 public and private school students in the fourth, eighth and 12th grades.

In Illinois, students don't fare well by many measures. For example, only 56.2 percent of this state's 11th graders met or exceeded state learning standards in the social sciences on the 2002-2003 Prairie State Achievement Exam. And Bradley, who teaches an entry-level course at Illinois State called U.S. Government and Civic Practices, says his students come into class not knowing the basics.

"Many students come in with very little appreciation of the Constitution, where it came from and why it's important," he says. "They know how a bill becomes a



investment to degree completion.”

Universities are using several methods to encourage students to participate in the community. The degree of involvement varies at each school. Some have begun by encouraging volunteerism and creating a few service-learning classes with existing resources. Others have hired staff to recruit students as volunteers, stimulate partnerships in the community, develop service-learning classes and create scholarships, internships and work studies. Many classes in political science, sociology, English, foreign language, and even computer science and engineering now have a service-learning component.

“We are learning that it is better and richer to practice the applications as they are learning,” Timmermans says. “Experience in the college education is a good thing.”

DePaul created the Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning & Community Service Studies with a \$5 million endowment in 2001. The Steans Center (pronounced Stains) now has eight full-time staff, a faculty director and five graduate assistants and 16 undergraduate students who serve as service-learning coordinators.

“The center serves as a liaison between the university and community-based organizations in Chicago,” says Rosing.

About 125 courses a year have a service-learning component at DePaul, Rosing says. DePaul also offers a



*Students at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville work with children each year at a health fair at Holy Rosary School in Fairmont City. SIUE participants are involved in the university's Student Leadership Development Program.*

law, but they don't know how government actually works.”

Bradley says this isn't because students are lazy or disengaged from community life. “There's a disconnect,” he says. “You have a generation that has been more engaged in volunteer activity than ever before. You have all these people building homes for the poor and donating to charity. But they won't vote and do things tied into that, like reading about politics or watching news programs.”

The federal government is unlikely to push Illinois to improve in this regard. National education officials' priorities have shifted away from teaching civics and the subjects associated with it, such as history and economics, says Frederick Drake, an Illinois State history professor

and director of the Illinois Institute for Civic Education.

The No Child Left Behind Act, promoted by President George W. Bush and approved by Congress in 2001, requires standards, testing and accountability in reading, math and, eventually, science. Social studies, particularly civics and history, have been marginalized, Drake says.

“There should be amendments (to the federal law) to include history,” he says. “Without a foundation of historical knowledge of who we are as a people, and what our ideas are, we're doing students a disservice.”

The federally required tests, and the prospect of sanctions should students fail, focuses schools and teachers on the required topics to the detriment of other

subjects, says Salvato, who is with Prism Educational Consulting and is a former schoolteacher.

Civics was already marginalized when the legislation was passed, and “No Child Left Behind just threw dirt in the grave,” Salvato says. “All the funding is going toward subjects they're going to test on.”

While No Child Left Behind does not ask schools to be accountable on how well students know their government, national best practices standards have been developed on that subject. Most often cited are those issued in 1994 by the nonprofit Center for Civic Education based in Calabasas, Calif. The center's mission is to “promote an enlightened and responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles and actively





University of Illinois at Springfield students plant trees as a community service. UIS has an Office of Student Volunteers and Service-Learning to connect the campus with volunteer opportunities.

community services studies major and offers 25 to 30 community service scholarships. The courses include a foreign-language immersion program that allows intermediate Spanish students to team with Spanish-speaking community residents in a reciprocal exchange of language practice. Rosing says the center is exploring ways to expand the program to French and other languages.

Claude Dufour, assistant professor of political science at DePaul, teaches a service-learning class that investigates the dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The class requires 25 hours of service in the community during the quarter at an organization that helps people with AIDS. "We realized that many students would not take the first step to pick up the telephone to become involved," Dufour says. "This opens the window for them."

Students have volunteered at one of six AIDS organizations including Vital Bridges, a food pantry for people with AIDS, and a group that provides an opportunity for drug addicts to exchange their used needles for sterile ones.

engaged in the practice of democracy in the United States and other countries."

The group's standards were developed over a decade with funding from the U.S. Department of Education and the Pew Charitable Trusts and input from 3,000 teachers and scholars. They call for students to master five major questions: What are civic life, politics and government? What are the foundations of the American political system? How does the government established by the Constitution represent the principles of U.S. democracy? What is the relationship of the United States to other countries and to world affairs? What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?

In grades five through eight, students should explain how the public agenda is set and talk about the purpose of special interest groups, the media, the courts and individuals.

In grades nine through 12, students should understand what citizenship means and what rights and responsibilities go along with it. High school students should also be able to defend their opinions on personal, political and economic issues,

such as obeying the law, voting, taxes and serving in the armed forces.

At the time the standards were developed, they were widely endorsed by groups ranging from the American Federation of Teachers to the National Association of Evangelicals, according to the *New York Times*. Yet states, including Illinois, have not signed on.

In several studies of states' standards for civic education, Illinois came in for criticism for lacking focus. "The [Illinois] standards are vague, imprecise and they don't have a directional component for teachers," Drake says. "They don't identify some core documents. They're ambiguous."

Meanwhile, the 2003 Shanker Institute study looked at the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Studies and Social Science Performance Descriptors. Paul Gagnon, who conducted the study, measured state standards by five criteria: Are the essentials of a civic core specified clearly? Are the topics teachable within the time teachers have? Do the historical documents examined provide a scope and sequence? Is the essential content required

of all students? Are the important facts and ideas presented coherently across subjects?

Gagnon noted Illinois failed to meet all of the criteria except the one that requires all students to study the essential content, which Illinois partially met.

Illinois had plenty of company at the bottom ranks in that study. Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming all failed to meet most or all of the criteria.

"[Illinois'] Learning Standards document fails in its introductory promise to clarify the learning expected and 'take the guesswork out of decisions' on programs and materials," Gagnon wrote. "Teachers are offered little in the way of engaging specifics by which they might open their lessons. Many [benchmarks] are too demanding for the early grades and too easy for the upper grades."

Gagnon added that the state's learning standards "are overstuffed, not with particulars but with vast headings." He cited one middle school benchmark that required students to explain relationships



"The stereotype of who they had in mind would have AIDS is wrong," Dufour says. "It's not just the prostitute who buys syringes and needles. They were shocked. Students like them showed up. Lawyers showed up with their briefcases. Some students also learned that their own behaviors were risky."

And they realized that individual effort makes a difference, Dufour says.

DePaul students also participate in international service-learning courses. A class is taught in El Salvador every other year, Rosing says. The class explores border issues in Nogales, Mexico. Another partnership is being considered in Kenya, he says.

Engelken says DePaul has the most developed civic engagement program in the state, but many other universities have progressive programs.

At Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, about 60 low-income children from Washington Park, Fairmont City and East St. Louis shadowed college students on Veterans Day. "For many of them, this was the first time they had seen



*A foreign language immersion program is one of the community service opportunities DePaul University in Chicago offers its students. U.S. News and World Report magazine recently cited DePaul as one of the nation's top schools for service learning.*

among the American economy and slavery, immigration, industrialization, labor and urbanization, 1700 to the present.

"The learning standards are unteachable and untestable in predictable ways because of their broad generalizations," the study concluded.

Salvato says her experience is that because the standards are so broad, teachers can make whatever they teach fit within the criteria.

The Shanker Institute study praised the models of several states, however, particularly Alabama, which was the only state to meet four of the five criteria.

In Alabama, the state allows local districts to control how the standards and methods are implemented, "but unlike most states it also leaves no doubt that course order and required content are state matters," the study stated.

That state lays out a clear program for all school districts to follow in teaching their children civics. It requires U.S. history and geography to 1900 in grades five and 10 and from 1900 to today in grades six and 11. It requires citizenship and world geography in seventh grade,

world history to 1500 in eighth grade and world history to the present in ninth grade. Classes covering history, geography, civics and economics are required in 10th, 11th and 12th grades.

"Most of the essential content for citizens' education — ideas, events, turning points and the works of individuals — are present or implied. Alabama's are among the best in the nation," the study states.

As it did with all states, the study criticizes Alabama for trying to present too many topics in too little classroom time.

Salvato researched the social studies questions asked on statewide tests given to Illinois students in elementary, middle and high school, comparing them to questions asked on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, and found they were weighted too heavily on asking students facts rather than asking them for analysis.

"The questions are not of a higher level. Lower level questions are statements of facts. If you ask how old do you have to be to become president, you simply have to know the age. As the question level goes up, kids are required

to compare and contrast and to apply information to new situations and to speculate. The questions we have are not higher level questions," Salvato says.

She also criticized Illinois' statewide test questions on social studies because they are more tests of reading skills than of subject knowledge. Students are given a passage to read and then asked to repeat the information they just read on the test questions, she says. "If you can read, you can pass the question," she says. "All the answers are there. The scores aren't going to be bad. You don't need to have learned anything."

Schools should be teaching more analysis and critical thinking in social studies classes if students are to be engaged in civic life, Drake says.

"There's much more than knowing there are three branches and knowing how a bill becomes a law. That standard is tiresome," he says. "It's much more important for students to read about the ideas that were involved in the creation of our own U.S. Constitution. A good citizen needs to be able to interpret evidence amid political circumstances

a college campus," says Melissa Troncale, student coordinator for Tri-City Youth Compact at SIUE.

Students between the ages of 10 and 15 went to lunch with a college mentor and talked to professors in the classes. "There is a huge drop-out rate for kids of that age in those towns," Troncale says. "Many of them don't make it to high school." Troncale helps plan a program once a month for at-risk youth in the Tri-City Youth Program.

Buses usually pick up the children from after-school care sites one Saturday a month and take them to the SIUE campus.

At the University of Illinois at Springfield, about 20 college students have begun training for a mentoring and tutoring program at Washington Middle School in Springfield, Maras says. The goal is to help the younger students improve their reading comprehension. About 70 percent of the children from the inner-city school read below grade level, he says. The UIS students will

work one-on-one with the younger students during their lunch hour.

That isn't the first program in which UIS students have helped at Washington Middle School. Students also have helped clean up the school grounds.

Trinity's Timmermans says civic engagement always has been a part of university life, but it is more intentional and directed now. "We took pre-existing skills and interests and funneled them toward a specific community," he says.

It's been almost a year since Jenna Hania brought water bottles to Springfield and Jocelyn Black prepared the PowerPoint presentation on behalf of Robbins.

That community still doesn't have the money it needs to make major infrastructure repairs, and the village hasn't been notified whether it has received a grant Black wrote for surveillance cameras for the police department.

But Robbins Mayor Irene Brodie says Trinity students have made a difference

in Robbins. "I feel that somebody is hearing us," she says. "Of everything that is happening, much is a result of the strengths students bring from Trinity."

Hania, a 19-year-old social work major from Cambridge, Ontario, says more people are aware of the difficulties in Robbins now. "I learned that our presentation was important," she says. "Even though I wasn't hands on and didn't live in Robbins, I could still make an impact. The impact was not that big things got changed. I think we did what Robbins needed at the time — to make themselves known. I think we were able to do that."

It also was a learning experience Hania and Black say they will never forget. Black, who plans to attend graduate school and continue her public service work, says, "It was kind of the hallmark of my college experience." □

*Theresa Grimaldi Olsen is a Springfield-based free-lance writer.*

and understand the role factual information plays in formation of public policy."

Bradley says he is even more discouraged by a class he offers on teaching government. "Many of the high school teachers or people who wanted to be high school teachers had given up," he says. "They say, 'I know the bottom line is my students aren't going to care about this.' That's quite an attitude."

To generate that interest, civics must begin in the early grades and continually be taught throughout middle school and high school, Bradley says. The Center for Civic Education standards stress that point. "The university isn't a good starting point," Bradley says.

The Illinois State Board of Education says the Illinois Learning Standards are merely suggestions. "We're a local control state," says state board spokeswoman Naomi Greene. "It's up to the individual school districts."

Illinois does trump other states in some areas. This state is one of only eight that requires a test for graduation that is either solely focused on civics or includes civics, according to a database prepared by the Education Commission of the States, a nonprofit group based in Denver, Colo.

Illinois school districts must test students on the U.S. Constitution, the state Constitution and the proper handling of the flag, according to state law. Local districts develop and administer their own tests, which students are required to pass to graduate.

Illinois also requires a similar load of social studies coursework compared to other states. Twenty-four states require three or more social studies credits to graduate. Illinois is among six states that require two credits. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia require 1.5 credits or less. Seven states have no statutory requirement.

But 34 states do require a government or civics component to social studies classes. That is optional here. Illinois law merely requires one year of U.S. history or one year of U.S. history/government.

State Rep. Monique Davis, a Chicago Democrat, wants to change that. She introduced a bill in the last session of the Illinois General Assembly that would require a unit of civics to be taught in every U.S. History class. Davis says the proposal died before it got to the floor. She plans to reintroduce the measure this session and push for support from the

members of the education committee.

"This time, our young people voted more than in some time," Davis says. "In a local election, that does not take place. We want citizens to realize they have a responsibility for what happens in their state and local governments. I would bet you most kids would not even be aware that government makes decisions in reference to recreational facilities in our parks."

Other lawmakers believe new laws would not be necessary if civics were tested in existing exams.

"I don't think mandates are the answer," says state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, an Elgin Republican. "I'd like to see civic education stressed a little more in the testing process that we already do. It used to be one of the highest priorities of the education system. People don't engage in activities they don't understand. Americans don't play cricket. It may be a great game but they don't watch it, they don't understand it. It's the same with civics." □

*Chris Wetterich is a reporter for the State Journal-Register in Springfield.*



# LINCOLN'S PRESIDENTIAL VIRTUES

*How do presidents see the oath of office?  
For Abraham Lincoln, it was a moral commitment*

Excerpt from a speech by William Lee Miller



At noon on March 4, 1861, the moral situation of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois was abruptly transformed.

That morning, arising in the Willard Hotel at 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue in downtown Washington, he has been a private citizen, an individual moral agent. But that afternoon, standing on the steps of the East Portico of the Capitol before 30,000 fellow citizens, he had become an oath-bound head of state.

He had been transmuted by the constitutional wizardry into the "executive" of the federal government of the United States, the position that the framers in Philadelphia 74 years before had decided to call by the word "President."

There abruptly settled upon his elongated frame a profound new responsibility, obligating, constraining and empowering him.

He would transform the office — and the office would transform him.

Lincoln's first virtue was his oath-bound promise to preserve the nation. Taking the oath had, for him, a depth and breadth of moral meaning that went beyond what it had meant for his immediate predecessors. For him, it was a *personal* and a *categorical* moral commitment to the preservation of the whole nation itself.

He had focused on the oath from the start of his awareness that he would

become president. Back in January of 1861, in Springfield, he hid away in a dingy, dusty back room, upstairs over a store to compose his inaugural address, and he started and ended with the oath.

South Carolina had already passed its ordinance of secession and celebrated with fireworks on December 20. Six other Deep South states followed. While they were claiming to have seceded, Lincoln, in a kind of secret counterpoint, was writing that what they were doing was "legally nothing."

(In Washington, William Seward, who would become his secretary of state, would persuade him to change "nothing" to the lawyer's word "void.")

Lincoln began his address by saying:

*In compliance with a custom as old as the government itself, I appear before you to address you*

*briefly, and to take, in your presence, the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States, to be taken by the President before he enters on the execution of his office.*

When he came to the end of the speech, as he first wrote it in Springfield, he sharply distinguished his moral situation from that of the rebels:

*In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war:*

And he explained that radical moral difference by reference to his oath:

*You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it.*


*You can forbear the assault upon it; I cannot shrink from the defense of it.*

To expand, Lincoln could have said, "You are still in the moral realm of calculation and possibility, of better and worse, of choice; I will be in the different moral realm of imperative and necessity.

I will have a sworn oath, a solemn, self-binding promise; you have not. You can act differently; I cannot.

The moral claim upon me is categorical; on you, hypothetical; for me, imperative, for you, discretionary. I will take a most

I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR THAT



solemn oath. You will have no such oath. My oath will be 'registered in Heaven' — you have no such heavenly registration for any purpose of yours. I cannot shrink — you are not prevented from altering your course of action."

And then he planned to finish, in the last words he would speak, echoing out across the inaugural day crowd and across the nation: "With you, and not with me, is the solemn question of 'Shall it be peace, or a sword?'"

When he got to Washington, he changed that ending. He took Seward's suggestion that there be a more conciliatory ending and, showing a quite extraordinary literary and rhetorical power of a new sort while working in the Willard Hotel under the intense pressures of the final week, converted Seward's raw materials by the alchemy of his editing from dross to gold.

But before he would come to the "mystic chords of memory" and "better angels of our nature" at the end of the address as he would finally give it, there was still in the penultimate paragraph that sharp distinction between his moral situation and that of his dissatisfied countrymen:

*You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend" it.*

Sitting behind him on the platform was another man who had taken that presidential oath, James Buchanan, with whom on this day he had ridden down Pennsylvania Avenue past the crowds, with the riflemen watching from the rooftops.

Buchanan had a different view of the meaning of the oath. He had not felt any presidential duty, nor found any constitutional power, to resist the secession of South Carolina or of six other states in the following months.

In December, after Lincoln's election, Buchanan had sent to Congress a weirdly

self-contradictory annual message full of astonishing reversals ending up nowhere.

He had blamed the crisis entirely on "the incessant and violent agitation of the slavery question throughout the North for the last quarter of a century."

That agitation, Buchanan said, "has at length produced its malign influence on the slaves and inspired them with vague notions of freedom."

This section of the human family being inspired by "vague notions of freedom" was deplored by this American president, not because of its vagueness but because of the freedom.

President Buchanan had described the result in language that might have come from a secessionist firebrand: "Hence a sense of security no longer exists around the family altar. This feeling of peace at home has given place to apprehensions of servile insurrections. Many a matron throughout the South retires at night in dread of what may befall herself and children before the morning."

But then, having accepted and given voice to his Southern friends' diagnosis, he astonished everyone by rejecting their prescription: He denied that there is any constitutional right to secede. He insisted, as Lincoln would, that the Union is perpetual.

There were sentences in this part of his message, indeed, that Lincoln could have taken over into his Inaugural Address. Buchanan said, for example, that to regard the Union as a mere voluntary association of states would make it "a rope of sand" (a figure of speech Lincoln could have used) with the 33 states becoming "as many petty, jarring, and hostile republics" (a dramatization of a point Lincoln would make, and Madison before him).

But at that point, having astonished many who did not think the weak and vacillating Buchanan (as they had come to think of him) had the fortitude to oppose secession, he reversed the astonishment by arguing that if, neverthe-

less, a state did resist, did secede, there was nothing the federal government could do about it. It could not "coerce" a state.

There, more specifically, was nothing the president could do about a state seceding.

Buchanan was inclined to belittle the president's role — "a mere executive officer," said Buchanan. "He is no more than the Chief Executive officer of the government. His province is not to make but to execute the laws."

"The Executive has no authority to decide what shall be the relations between the federal government and South Carolina," said Buchanan.

Seward had given a witty summary of President Buchanan's position: "I think the president has conclusively proved two things," said Seward of Buchanan. "First, no state has the right to secede from the Union, unless it wishes to, and, second, that it is the president's duty to enforce the laws, unless somebody opposes him."

That would *not* be Lincoln's view. Where Buchanan sought avoidance and found restriction, and therefore excuse, this new president would accept responsibility and find necessity and therefore empowerment.

Whereas President Buchanan had not believed that that oath required him to resist secession, or that the Constitution permitted him to, Lincoln believed that the Constitution did permit him to resist, and that his oath required him to.


The Chief Justice who administered the oath certainly did not think the oath required, or the Constitution permitted, any such thing.

When, on Inauguration Day, Lincoln finished delivering his address, there arose on the platform a withered, aged and stooped figure, a "gnarled corpse," who came forward accompanied by a clerk holding a large Bible.

This was Roger Taney, the author of the Dred Scott decision, now about to serve as Chief Justice under his *ninth* president. The Chief Justice inaudibly administered the oath, with the clerk

I WILL FAITHFULLY EXECUTE THE OFFICE OF





holding the Bible, and the new president speaking the most solemn oath, registered, as he put it, in Heaven, the two men radically disagreeing about what it meant:

*I, Abraham Lincoln, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.*

Before three months would pass, Lincoln would have occasion to make a striking reference to his oath in an exchange with the Chief Justice.

Taney, who was altogether sympathetic to slavery and to secession, challenged the new President's suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* in Maryland as it teetered on the brink of secession. He turned a constitutional phrase into a challenge to Lincoln: One who has sworn to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed," said the Chief Justice, should not himself violate those laws.

Lincoln would make a famous response in his message to a special session of Congress on July 4, 1861:

*[A]re all the laws, but one, to go unexecuted, and the government itself go to pieces, lest one be violated?... Would not the official oath be broken, if the government should be overthrown, when it was believed that disregarding the single law, would tend to preserve it?*

The distinguished 20th century constitutional lawyer Edward Corwin would write that this reference to the oath is "the outstanding precedent ... for treating the oath as a source of power" and that Lincoln permanently recruited power for the presidency, "recruited it, that is, from the presidential oath."

But is it not a rather curious foreshortening of the meaning of an oath to treat it as a "source of power?"

Is not the word "recruit" rather an odd choice of verb in this connection?

On its face, as lawyers say, an oath is not a distribution of power but a moral commitment, a heightened promise, a solemn engagement of the self set in some frame of ultimate obligation. If there is any "recruiting," then, it is the moral agent who is recruited, and seriously engaged, to conduct himself in a specified way.

Surely, one should deal with it in the realm of the rights and wrongs of human conduct before one inquires what that might mean in the realm of power.

Lincoln would write in 1864:

*Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power.*

The oath was a moral definition and a limitation of his conduct.

Others would point to the immense power that in that moment came into his hands; he would point instead to the constraining duty that was antecedent to the power, and the reason for the power.

Lincoln would be required by his oath to do things that he would not have done as a private citizen, and was prevented by his oath from doing other things that he would have done as a private citizen.

In the draft of "all the laws but one" passage in the message to the special session, he had written in the first person so that the requirements that the oath placed upon him personally, as a responsible moral agent, are more forcefully expressed. He wrote:

*I should consider my official oath broken, if I should allow the government to be overthrown, when I might think the disregarding of a single law could tend to preserve it.*

## Lincoln bound

Abraham Lincoln's words, spoken and written, are collected in a two-volume set by The Library of America, *Abraham Lincoln Speeches and Writings, 1832-1858* and *Abraham Lincoln Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865*.

Lincoln's speeches, letters, messages and proclamations were edited by historian Don E. Fehrenbacher, using texts from *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler and published by the Abraham Lincoln Association, and *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln: Supplement 1832-1865* by Roy P. Basler.

Fehrenbacher used Lincoln materials from the Illinois State Historical Library, the Lincoln Legals Project, now part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (the University of Illinois at Springfield co-sponsors the project), and the Illinois State Historical Society.

*The Editors*

★ ★ ★

*William Lee Miller is a scholar in Ethics and Institutions at the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia-Charlottesville. He also has taught at Yale University, Smith College and Indiana University. He is the author of Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography, which was published in 2002 and received awards from the Abraham Lincoln Institute, the Lincoln Group of New York and the Civil War Round Table.*

*This is an excerpt of a speech he delivered in October as part of the 2004 Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series, "Ethics & Power," sponsored by the Center for State Policy and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Springfield. DVDs of the entire lecture series are available through the Center by calling 217-206-7163.*

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND WILL...

# Building support

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Demand for rent subsidies outstrips supply in the suburbs. This isn't new. But now advocates have an ad campaign and a state task force to help sway lawmakers

by Joseph Ryan

In suburban Lake County, home to opulent lakeshore mansions and the expansive estates of Barrington and other once-rural enclaves, more than 7,000 low-income residents need help with their rent.

Most may never get it.

The county receives only enough federal funding to provide about 2,300 housing vouchers, commonly known as Section 8. Demand for this federal rent assistance far outstrips supply throughout the suburbs.

Staring at a waiting list twice the size of its voucher rolls, DuPage County began turning away new applicants more than two years ago. And while the suburban poor languish in those long lines, thousands of their Chicago counterparts have a tough time turning their Section 8 vouchers into tickets out of the inner city.

Dawn Wilson, a mother of two, is one of the lucky ones.

"I had to get out of Chicago," she says, standing outside her apartment in affluent Lake Zurich, just north of western Cook County.

Five years ago, the disabled single mother and her two daughters lived in a Chicago public high-rise, where the halls reeked of urine and gangs lurked on the streets. Now her children attend schools that rank among the state's best, and Wilson volunteers for a local church.

"This has really made a difference," she says with a soft smile.

Equitable housing advocates see in Wilson the Section 8 program's full potential. But they admit it's a mark often missed. Mobility is supposedly Section 8's best trait, but three decades after its

creation, the program still struggles to stir migration from the crime and concentrated poverty of the inner city to the employment opportunities and quality schools of suburbia.

In the collar counties, local governments often are reluctant to approve building plans that call for apartment complexes or low-cost homes, this despite a state program that helps subsidize such construction projects. Meanwhile, Chicago is demolishing its infamous public housing towers, further straining the region's affordable housing market and ratcheting up angst among suburban landlords already wary of the city's Section 8 renters.

These challenges have united a coalition of charities, churches and business groups, who hope to make inroads by prodding action in Springfield and swaying public sentiment in suburbia.

The cause is not new. But this time housing advocates have a multimillion-dollar ad campaign and a special housing task force commissioned by Gov. Rod Blagojevich to back them up. They're focused on state lawmakers, afraid their agenda will fall on deaf ears at the federal level, where President George W. Bush has already lowered Section 8 rent allowances.

The advocates say they represent the interests of the more than 56,000 voucher recipients in the Chicago area, mostly people who earn less than a third of the region's median income. For a family of three like Wilson's, that means \$15,150 a year.

Nationwide, about 2 million families depend on Section 8 vouchers to pay all

or most of their rent. Created in 1974, vouchers were the prescribed antidote for the government-built "projects" that towered over urban ghettos. Section 8 hasn't cured all the ills associated with public housing, but advocates still support the underlying diagnosis.

"You will never break the cycle of poverty if they don't have access to employment and access to decent schools so their kids can get good jobs," says Christine Klepper, director of Housing Choice Partners, a counseling service for voucher recipients.

But the migration that Klepper and others so strongly advocate remains stalled. A first-of-its-kind study released by the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance in September found 64 percent of the Chicago area's 56,109 voucher holders live in areas where the poverty rate tops 10 percent.

That contrasts sharply with northwest suburbs such as Schaumburg, home to the state's largest shopping mall and a paltry 2 percent poverty rate. Section 8 recipients account for only 3.4 percent of rental units in the village. At the southern edge of Cook County, voucher recipients represent a third of all renters in Harvey, which has a poverty rate of 20.3 percent, nearly three times the state average.

The study concludes that some suburban landlords unfairly refuse voucher holders, some mayors continually deny proposals to build cheap housing, and the majority of the public, at the very least, doesn't seem to care.

Housing advocates say overcoming this



mix of indifference and intolerance is paramount as the region faces a critical juncture. Chicago is halfway through a decade-long plan to demolish its high-rises and relocate about 15,000 tenants.

At least 2,700 have transitioned to Section 8 rolls, with some of them moving to the suburbs. Even though this migration is relatively modest, researchers say suburbanites are increasingly apprehensive, fearing Chicago's poor will settle in their communities and bring the city's crime with them.

"There is a lot of stigma attached to these vouchers already," says Julie Dworkin, associate director of policy at Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. "It is even more so in the suburbs where they assume these are just people coming from the city."

That's where the ad campaign comes in. Beginning this month, advocates plan to spend several million dollars on television and newspaper ads largely aimed at suburbanites and the legislators they send to Springfield.

"We need to break down some hardened misconceptions," says Kevin Jackson, director of the Chicago Rehab Network, which is heading up the ad blitz. "We know that can lead to more receptiveness from policy-makers."

They hope the effort will add to their base, which already received a boost when Gov. Rod Blagojevich empanelled an Affordable Housing Task Force shortly after taking office two years ago. The panel has provided a platform for the church, charity, business and government leaders looking to expand housing opportunities in the Chicago region.

This spring, the task force will present legislators with a litany of recommendations. One option would provide financial incentives to wealthy suburbs that make room for affordable housing developments, while taking state money from those that don't.

Such a measure would dovetail with a 2003 state law requiring that at least 10 percent of a municipality's housing be affordable, which for the suburbs means monthly rents can't exceed \$775. Towns that skirt the law could eventually face a state panel empowered to trump local zoning authority.

Another new proposal would forbid landlords from rejecting tenants based on

## Section 8 in the suburbs

	FAMILY POVERTY RATE	RENTAL UNITS	VOUCHER RENTALS
<b>SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY</b>			
Arlington Heights	1.6%	7,167	2.1%
Schaumburg	2.0%	9,728	3.4%
<hr/>			
Ford Heights	45.1%	648	22.1%
Harvey	20.3%	3,886	33.9%
<hr/>			
<b>LAKE COUNTY</b>			
Barrington	2.3%	807	1.0%
Mundelein	3.0%	1,977	0.0%
<hr/>			
North Chicago	12.0%	4,914	6.8%
Zion	10.1%	3,090	28.6%

*This sampling of suburban housing shows that voucher recipients are more likely to live in areas with a higher concentration of poverty. The statewide family poverty rate is 7.8 percent.*

SOURCES: Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, U.S. Census Bureau

their source of income, namely housing vouchers. The task force also is considering whether an obligation to create affordable housing should be included in state-subsidized economic deals extended to private employers.

"There is no real silver bullet here," says John Lukehart, director of the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities. "It is a lot of things combined that will do it."

Currently, the cornerstone of the agenda is aimed at assisting some of the 56,000 Illinoisans on waiting lists for housing vouchers. The legislation, which was approved in the House last fall, would add \$11 to the cost of filing real estate documents, generating \$30 million for a state rent subsidy program.

It would serve roughly 5,500 renters, including about 1,100 in the collar counties, where the number of residents eligible for Section 8 assistance jumped 84 percent between 1990 and 2000, according to a Chicago Urban League study released in November.

The coalition of housing advocates began to show its strength with that legislation this fall when it won the unlikely support of Rep. Terry Parke, a Hoffman Estates Republican known for tirades against big government. Parke was swayed by a coordinated lobbying effort. He received hundreds of calls from church groups and a few suburban businesses worried about finding cheap labor.

"That is really the first time that kind

of thing has happened," Parke says.

"Normally I don't support this kind of legislation."

Parke's conversion aside, there is still plenty of resistance to overcome. Some suburbs already are looking for a way around the 2003 affordable housing law. For example, mayors in the northwest suburban Barrington area, known for its horse stables, are pressing lawmakers to exempt their towns.

And some suburban landlords simply say the federal Section 8 program is too burdensome for them to bother accepting vouchers.

"It is not worth the aggravation," said Bruce Beddard, who refuses to take vouchers at his properties in Carpentersville. He says the program's rules make it difficult for landlords to recoup money if their property is damaged.

"They would write that off as I don't understand the system, or I'm racist," he says. "But that is just not the case. I think it is a good idea, but it just doesn't work."

Yet, housing advocates remain confident, touting accomplishments such as the enlistment of Rep. Parke. After all, they say, this is the best shot they have had in years, and it comes during a critical time.

"Is it something that is going to take some time? Yes," says Klepper of Housing Choice Partners. "But I have seen a lot of improvement over the last couple years, and I think it is doable." □

*Joseph Ryan is a staff reporter for the Daily Herald based in Arlington Heights.*

# NOVEL IDEA

Review by James Krohe Jr.

## *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHICAGO*

Edited by James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating and Janice L. Reiff

The University of Chicago Press

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What many Illinoisans, including many who live there, don't know about Chicago and its suburbs would fill a fat book. A book about 1,100 pages long, in fact, with some 1,400 topic entries in small type. The new *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, published by the University of Chicago Press last fall

to admiring reviews, is a veritable hardware store of facts, offering not only the usual encyclopedia entries augmented by hundreds of old photographs, original maps and graphics, but interpretive essays, back-of-the-book dictionary descriptions of people and businesses, a time line, tables and statistical

appendixes and an index.

Cramming a region of many millions into one book takes some doing — in this case well over 500 contributors and a staff of 50 or so working for more than 10 years. Using printed paper to convey information these days seems quaint, even quixotic. Happily, the

## THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHICAGO

South State between Van Buren and Congress, pictured here around 1912, was a mecca for arcades and theaters.



The Chicago Hebrew Institute celebrates sports activities for young athletes. Ethnic organizations thrived in the early 20th century.

William F. (alias Buffalo Bill) Cody awaits a 1916 performance at the Old Cubs Park.





work has a future among iPod users as well as inkheads; a free and infinitely expandable (and correctable) version is set to debut next spring online at the Web site of the Chicago Historical Society.

The “hey-kids-let’s-put-on-an-encyclopedia” moment is generally credited to Ann Durkin Keating, professor of history at North Central College in Naperville. She modestly recalls that the idea of an encyclopedia was not new to her; several big cities had or were about to publish such works in the late 1880s and early ’90s. As an official project, Chicago’s very own encyclopedia dates to 1991, when Keating and James Grossman, vice president for research and education at the Newberry Library, began knocking on funders’ doors.

An encyclopedia on Chicago may have been a novel idea, but encyclopedias in Chicago are nothing new. The *World Book Encyclopedia* and *Compton’s Pictured Encyclopedia* were first published in the city; the venerable *Encyclopædia Britannica* relocated its editorial offices to Chicago from New York in 1931, where they remain, after its purchase by Sears Roebuck & Co. The interest

of Sears in *Britannica* is not as odd as it may seem at first, as the popular encyclopedias were among the first do-it-yourself tool kits, the perfect gift for the American whose ambition exceeded her education.

The editors — Keating, Grossman and Janice Reiff of UCLA — grappled with complicated choices that vex the compilers of any reference work with serious intentions: what to talk about, what to say about it and how to arrange what is said. There is no one right way to do such things; at times it must have seemed to the editors there was no good way. Consider the difficulties in treating Chicago’s dizzying array of self-conscious national, racial and religious groups. Before they were relabeled by their new neighbors in this country, many immigrant peoples defined themselves by their villages, not by nations or ethnic groups; the people that outsiders saw as Italians saw themselves as Calabrians or Tuscans, much of whose history in Chicago has been about trying to preserve their Calabrian-ness and Tuscan-ness. Immigrants to Chicago from the Arab nation of Syria are not “Arabs” in the popular sense, for instance, but are mostly Lebanese

Christians. However, to abandon popular usage means referring to people by terms that many readers will not recognize. The *Encyclopedia* has an entry called “Germans,” though there was not yet a nation by that name when Germanic people began coming to Chicago.

As for how the entries were arranged, the work rewards browsing as well as purposeful looking, in fact it demands it. The standard encyclopedia is like a supermarket in which the goods are stocked alphabetically by brand name; the format makes it easy to find what the reader is looking for if he knows its name, but makes it easy to miss other, possibly more savory offerings. The editors of the *Encyclopedia* thus added cross references and an excellent index to help readers find topics hidden from easy view in other entries.

In some cases, the reader will be left to wander the aisles. The editors often resorted to the arcane terminology of the expert; readers looking for information on the region’s many lakes will not find it under that term but under “Lacustrine System.” Most of the public probably know the famous fire of 1871 as the

Art courtesy of the University of Chicago Press  
Photographs from the Chicago Historical Society and the Land Owner map from the Newberry Library in Chicago

This 1874 map shows a bird’s-eye view, from the west, of Chicago’s suburbs.



Crowds gathered outside the Milwaukee Avenue Bank following its August 1906 failure.

Hull settlement house founder Jane Addams and child welfare advocate Mary McDowell protest in 1917.







Chicago Fire, but the entry about that thrilling show does not appear in either the text or the index under that phrase. Historians generally refer to it as the Great Fire — Chicago has had many bad fires besides that one — but there is no text entry under that name either. “Great Fire (1871)” is in the index, which steers one to a perfunctory entry in the text titled “Fire of 1871” that offers a mere 130 words on a topic about which many books have been written. While the event is described in several aspects in no fewer than 48 other text mentions and maps, piecing together that story is a tedious and, given the weight of the book, potentially exhausting undertaking.

The *Encyclopedia* tells us something about the present as well as the past. Like every reference book, it reflects its time, its social preoccupations, its intellectual fashions. This one is regionalist, ecumenical as pertains to political movements, and inclusive as all get out. Culturally, it accepts most aspects of popular culture (“Wrigley Field” and Wrestling”) as legitimate subjects of comment. Socially, the editors decreed that any group that has founded an institution of some kind was proof that its members were numerous and self-conscious enough to qualify for its own entry — an easy test, on which basis project staff identified 146 groups in the region. Each gets an entry, the way that such groups used to get statues in the parks.

The work’s geographic inclusiveness is even more perfectly comprehensive. Editors rightly eschewed the parochialism typical of the Chicago book by not only acknowledging that suburbs exist but by

treating Chicago’s country cousins as parts of the greater city. All 298 incorporated municipalities in the eight-county bi-state metropolitan area (as here defined) got entries, as do six communities outside it.

To assert that the suburbs matter is one thing; to insist that every suburb matters is another. Many a reader will find that some of the 10 inches of text devoted to, say, Bartlett might have been better spent on fuller accounts of any of a hundred different topics. This everyone-gets-a-medal approach adds to the work’s heft (the *Encyclopedia* weighs nearly seven pounds) and cost, without always adding to its value.

If there is too much about unimportant towns, there is not nearly enough about important people. Instead of entries summarizing the lives and achievements of the region’s prominent men and women, the editors opted for a dictionary-style listing in which the lives of more than 2,000 former persons are reduced to the dates of their births and deaths and fewer than a dozen words of description. “What could our readers learn in 200 words about Frank Lloyd Wright or Jane Addams,” ask the editors rhetorically in explaining their decision to opt for this treatment, “that they could not readily find in dozens of reference books with local or national orientations ...? Very little.”

Really? Only Chicagoans of national repute are described in such works, while much of what is available about locally significant persons is hard to find or of dubious accuracy. Besides, it is one of the virtues of an authoritative encyclopedia that it gives its readers just those 200 words of all the thousands in print that are the essential 200 words about our Wrights and Addamses. The absence of a comprehensive catalog of Chicago lives keeps the *Encyclopedia* from being the perfectly satisfying work it might have been, although, to be fair, it probably also kept it from being a perfectly unwieldy work as well.

The grateful reader is obliged to point out other weaknesses, not in the hope of dissuading buyers but of nudging the editors of future editions toward improvements. Writers long struggled to make Chicago seem significant, but they seldom had to worry about making it seem lively; the careful prose style used here convinces us of the former but leaves us unconvinced

as to the latter. As for tone, the *Encyclopedia*’s is earnest and establishmentarian — the eternal, changeless voice of the school teacher, ever so slightly prissy and circumspect to a fault. Here one can learn about anti-loitering ordinances, the Anti-Property Tax League, the Anti-Saloon League, anti-slum organizations, the Anti-Smoke League, anti-sweatshop campaigns, anti-unionism, anti-urbanism, the anti-vice movement and anti-war movements, but not the city’s enduring anti-Semitism. Indeed, the *Encyclopedia* does not explicitly address religious antagonism in general, which, in a reference book about Chicago, is like not mentioning politics.

To complain too much, however, would be churlish, given what has been accomplished. Such omissions should be called quirks rather than faults in a work that offers much more to admire than to criticize. Of particular note are the maps original to this work. Fifty-six thematic maps tell stories hard to tell in other ways, such as the shifting ethnic landscape of the city. Another 386 thumbnail maps illustrate points in the text, such as the three found under the entry “Leisure,” that, by charting the locations of city movie theaters in 1926, 1937 and 2002, show at a glance how that once-essential institution has high-tailed it to the suburbs. *Atlantic Monthly*’s books columnist Benjamin Schwarz enthused about the maps: “At once highly analytical and exceptionally comprehensible, they’re the most illuminating and provocative that I’ve encountered in a single book.” The names of Michael Conzen and Dennis McClendon, cartographic editor and designer respectively, deserve to be mentioned.

The test of a general reference work is not whether it includes all the reader knows about the one or two topics she has mastered, but whether it tells her things she didn’t know about the dozens of topics she has not mastered. The *Encyclopedia of Chicago* passes that test admirably. Imagining the *Encyclopedia* that might have been should not make us less grateful for the one we have. □

James Krohe Jr., a veteran commentator on Illinois public issues, is writing a guide to the state’s history and culture for the Illinois Humanities Council.



# Along the divide

## *Photographs of the Dan Ryan Expressway*

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*Jay Wolke, 2004*

*Center for American Places*

*distributed by the University of Chicago Press*

*Jay Wolke, who chairs the art and design department at Columbia College Chicago, shot thousands of miles of film along the Dan Ryan Expressway in the 1980s. "I wanted to examine the road as an expression of the urban lexicon," wrote Wolke, who, over two decades, turned his pictures into a book-long essay. He's depicted life along the Ryan, which, from the Loop south to 95th Street, "roars across the city like a giant concrete and asphalt river," writes Dominic Pacyga, in his essay closing the book, the fifth in a series on Chicago and its environs.*

The Editors











## Sanders named to SIU board

**Keith Sanders**, the former executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, was appointed to serve out the term, which runs until 2007, of retiring Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees member **Harris Rowe**.

Sanders, who is from Spring Grove (and is no relation to Ted Sanders, former SIU president), received his bachelor's and master's degrees from SIU Carbondale. He later joined the faculty and served as dean of the College of Communication and Fine Arts. After serving in the University of Wisconsin system, he headed up the state higher education board from 1998 until his retirement in 2002.

The appointment requires state Senate confirmation.

## Awards

**Tim Samuelson**, cultural historian for the city of Chicago, was one of 72 recipients of the 2004 Studs Terkel Humanities Service Awards. He was honored for his stewardship of the city's history and for his volunteer efforts on restoration of such landmarks as Union Station and Chess Records. He was selected by Chicago's mayor. Pinckneyville's mayor selected Dr. **Tim Mathis**, who purchased and restored that southern Illinois city's historic Kunz Opera House. The awards are presented by the Illinois Humanities Council to honor champions of the humanities in communities.

## Obama picks aide

U.S. Senator-elect Barack Obama tapped departing Democratic Leader Tom Daschle's chief of staff **Pete Rouse** to head his office team.

Rouse had been chief of staff for Daschle, a South Dakota Democrat, since 1985. Daschle, who had been Senate Democratic leader, lost his re-election bid in November.

## Curry leaving post in administration

**Julie Curry**, a former state representative from Decatur, resigned her position in the Blagojevich Administration to join a lobbying firm. She begins this month with Illinois Strategies, a firm with offices in Springfield and Chicago headed by John Potts, who was a partner with former Democratic state Rep. Al Ronan in the firm Ronan Potts LLC. That partnership, Curry says, was to be dissolved at the end of the year.

Though neither of the principals have been charged with wrongdoing, in December that firm was sentenced by a federal judge for rigging bids for McCormick Place contracts.

In the governor's office, Curry was deputy chief of staff for economy and environment. She says she doesn't think her move from government to a firm that lobbies government for its clients violates the "revolving door" provision of the state ethics law because she had no involvement in the negotiation or awarding of any contracts.



Julie Curry

## For the record: Legislative turnover

When members of the 94th General Assembly take their oaths of office this month, a few fresh faces will be among them.

In the House, Chicago Democrat **John D'Amico**, a city aviation department foreman, won the 15th District seat. **Dan Beiser**, Alton city treasurer, was named by Madison County Democrats to replace Rep. **Steve Davis**, Democrat of Bethalto, who retired citing health reasons a month after being elected for a sixth time to his 111th District seat. Cicero Democrat **Michelle Chavez**, a business supervisor, won the 24th District seat held by **Frank Aguilar**, a Cicero Republican. Bloomingdale Republican **Roger Jenisch**, an insurance agent, ran unopposed in the 45th District. Chicago Democrat **Milton Patterson**, an electrical engineer, ran unopposed in the 32nd District after defeating incumbent **Charles Morrow III** in the primary election. Willow Hill Republican **David Reis**, a farmer and businessman, defeated 108th District incumbent **Bill Grunloh**, a Democrat from Effingham. Peoria Republican **Aaron Schock**, businessman and school board president, defeated four-term Peoria Heights Democrat Rep. **Ricca Slone**. Crystal Lake Republican **Michael Tryon**, a businessman, won the open 64th District seat.

In the Senate, four seats changed. Granville Republican **Gary Dahl**, a businessman, defeated Peru Democrat **Patrick Welch**, a 22-year incumbent in the 38th District. Roselle Republican **Carole Pankau**, who had served the House 45th District for 12 years, won the open 23rd District seat. **Kwame Raoul**, Democrat of Chicago, will serve the remainder of Sen. **Barack Obama**'s term in the 13th District (see December 2004, page 34). In the 43rd District, Sen. **Larry Walsh**, Democrat of Elwood, resigned after winning election as Will County chief executive officer. A new senator is expected to be appointed this month to serve the remaining two years of Walsh's term.

## Honors

Several individuals received 2004 Richard H. Dreihaus Public Innovator Awards from the Government Assistance Program, a nonprofit organization based at DePaul University. The program aims to encourage excellence in service from public entities. The award honors public sector teams for creating unique ways to improve services. The honorees were **John Roberson**, commissioner of Chicago Department of Aviation; **Joyce Gallagher**, commissioner of the Chicago Department on Aging; Dr. **John Wilhelm**, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, **Lori Levin**, executive director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority; **Barbara Banks**, the CIO of the Chicago Housing Authority; and **Joseph Vanderwerff**, county engineer for Winnebago County Highway Department.

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## Key:

Fed Reg = Federal Regulatory Law; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin = Governmental, Municipal, Lobbying & Administrative Law; Pub Finance = Public Finance Law; Pub Utilities = Public Utilities Law (gas, water, electric); School = School Law

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## LETTERS

### Assessment wrong

In the article "Progress lost?" (see *Illinois Issues*, November 2004, page 24), Naomi Lynn remarks that people who take the CLEP tests "study at home and if you pass a standardized test, you don't have to go to class at all." She also says "these are the same graduates who cannot speak or write good English."

CLEP test takers are examined in five areas, one of which is English composition. Test takers must attain a certain score established by their university in order to "pass" the exams. At the University of Illinois at Springfield, these scores, along with copies of any transcripts, letters of recommendation and a narrative explaining how one has learned outside the classroom, are reviewed by an admissions committee made up of faculty. Only after that can one be admitted to college as a junior.

Taking a CLEP exam can save money, as well as save repeating a class already completed.

*Sherri Boner  
Springfield*

### Correction

Pinckneyville opera house restorer Dr. Tim Mathis was incorrectly identified in the December issue (see page 28). The writer sincerely apologizes.

### Write us

Your comments are welcome.  
Please keep them brief (250 words).  
We reserve the right to excerpt them.

Letters to the Editor  
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Charles N. Wheeler III



## It's the New Year and one can always hope

by Charles N. Wheeler III

**A**mong the time-honored traditions of the holiday season, perhaps none is as hopeful and yet as depressing as the practice of making New Year's resolutions.

Hopeful because the turn of the calendar page to a new year seems to wipe the slate clean, affording a chance to start afresh in the struggle to surmount one's perceived shortcomings. So folks resolve to lose 15 pounds or to quit smoking or to clean up that messy desk. Depressing because, before the calendar page turns again, many of us will be backsliding: super-sizing the fries or bumming cigarettes from pals or adding new stacks of paper to the archival mounds.

One can resolve the apparent paradox, however, and relish the satisfaction of good intentions, yet avoid the guilt of failed promises. The secret is to make the resolutions for someone else, a popular pastime for columnists and editorial writers year-round.

So, as *Illinois Issues* embarks upon its 30th year — and this column its 22nd — your author offers the following handful of resolutions for our statewide leaders, especially Gov. Rod Blagojevich and members of the incoming 94th General Assembly. Please resolve to:

- Address forthrightly the state's chronic budget crisis. For the past four years, including FY 2005, the state has been running a budgetary deficit. The money in the state's main checkbook

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***So, as Illinois Issues  
embarks upon its 30th year  
— and this column its  
22nd — your author offers  
the following resolutions  
for our statewide leaders.***

account on June 30 has not been enough to cover leftover bills from the just-ended fiscal year. While the administration has pared the deficit from \$1.2 billion in FY02 to a projected \$566 million in FY05, another shortfall looms for the spending plan the governor and lawmakers will put together next spring. The Economic and Fiscal Commission estimates revenue growth for FY 2006 at \$325 million. That's little more than half what's needed to cover a statutorily mandated \$600 million hike in pension contributions, not to mention continued increases in health care costs for state workers and Medicaid clients or inflationary growth in other programs.

In the two budgets he's authored, Blagojevich has relied on the fiscal equivalent of sleight of hand to survive, but the rabbits now are all but gone from the hat. And what's perhaps the last major legerdemain left — expanding gaming in Illinois — strikes many lawmakers and

citizens alike as too much black magic for their tastes.

A reasonable alternative would be to revamp the state's outdated revenue structure so that income more closely matches spending commitments and program needs by expanding the sales tax base to include some services and by increasing the income tax rate — approaches the governor so far has deemed taboo.

- Reform a system of financing public schools that has earned the state failing grades for fairness — for four years in a row. Of the state's nearly 400 elementary districts, for example, about 13 percent spend more than \$10,000 per pupil, while roughly 9 percent spend less than \$6,000 for each student. The equity gap stems from the state's heavy reliance on local real estate taxes; some high-spending school districts have property tax bases 10 times greater than their lower-spending counterparts.

Fixing the problem is not rocket science; decades of studies have concluded the state needs to bear a greater share of the school funding burden than its current 36 percent. The best way to achieve that is to replace local property tax dollars with state income or sales tax dollars, with additional funds going to poorer school districts. What's been missing, though, has been the political will to effect the swap.

- Provide access to adequate and affordable health care for all Illinoisans.

More than 1.8 million Illinoisans had no health insurance coverage during 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau reported, but almost twice that many — almost one in three residents under age 65 — went without coverage for all or part of the previous two years, according to a study by Families USA, a consumer advocacy group.

To his credit, the governor has expanded substantially health care coverage for low-income families and the working poor the last two years, chiefly by hiking the income ceiling for Medicaid eligibility. But broader coverage also has boosted Medicaid costs in a time of financial stress.

Moreover, state coverage is of minimal value to folks living in parts of the state where no doctors are available to treat their conditions, as is the case in much of rural Illinois, particularly the southern third of the state where specialists are leaving because of high medical malpractice insurance premiums.

Improving access likely will require changes in the rules on personal injury lawsuits and in the regulation of insur-

***An admittedly ambitious list of resolutions, so one should not be surprised if they are not met. Indeed, most of them echo sentiments often expressed in this space over the past two decades.***

ance companies' underwriting practices, reforms that will require some compromise from two of the state's most powerful special interest groups, trial lawyers and insurers.

- Alleviate the state's serious shortfall in affordable housing. Lawmakers made a good start on the supply side last year by ordering a statewide survey to identify communities lacking affordable housing and requiring them to develop remedial plans.

Now awaiting final Senate action is a House-approved measure that would help

on the demand side by providing rental assistance to low-income families through an \$11 surcharge on real estate documents filed with county recorders. Sending it to Blagojevich for his signature would be a nice way to bring the curtain down on the 93rd General Assembly.

- Rewrite the state's criminal code and sentencing laws to place greater emphasis on alternatives to prison time and enhanced rehabilitation programs, thus reducing prison crowding and the recidivism rate that figures so prominently in the once-again-growing inmate population. Being smarter on crime makes good budget sense, too, when taxpayers foot a \$20,000-plus-a-year bill for every adult inmate.

An admittedly ambitious list of resolutions, so one should not be surprised if they are not met. Indeed, most of them echo sentiments often expressed in this space over the course of the past two decades. Still, one can always hope — after all, it is a New Year. □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.*

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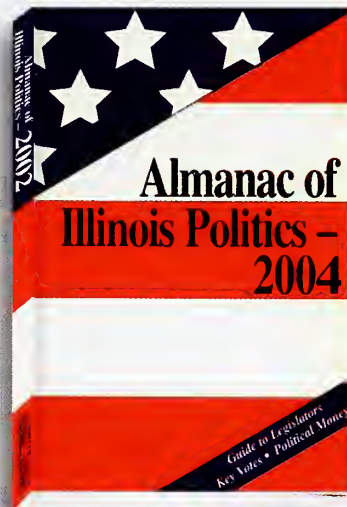
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